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UPS AND DOWNS

—OF A—

"CROOK'S" LIFE.

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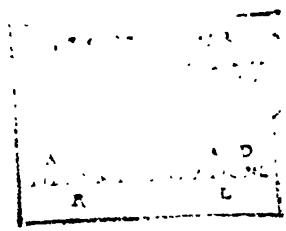

AN

SAMUEL A. BAILEY.

UPS AND DOWNS

—OF A—

"CROOK'S" LIFE

BY AN EX-CONVICT,

SAMUEL A. BAILEY.

PUBLISHED BY
THE AUTHOR.
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INTRODUCTION.

IT was while serving the last days of my five years' sentence in Clinton Prison, that I began to think of what I could do to earn an honest living after I should once more be a free man. No one who has not worn the prison uniform can realize how almost impossible it is for a man with the brand of an ex-convict upon him to find employment. The curse of the penitentiary is upon him, and it pursues him with relentless energy wherever he turns.

I had been one of the best known of New York's criminal classes for many years, and "SAMUEL A. BAILEY, THE FORGER," was a familiar name to the police. It was while turning over this matter in my mind —for I had long since determined that no human power should ever induce me to return to my criminal career—that I concluded to write the story of my life. This little book is a truthful history of

my somewhat eventful life, and associations with the well-known criminals of the day, and was written in my cell at Clinton Prison by permission of the prison officials.

If I can sell enough of my books to earn a living, the temptation that sometimes drives ex-convicts back to crime will, in my case at least, be removed, and I will again have a new start in life.

SAMUEL A. BAILEY.

Clinton Prison, New York.

UPS AND DOWNS

OF A

"CROOK'S" LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

HOW I MET THE GANG OF FORGERS.

IT was a cold morning in December, in 1871, when I stepped from the rear car of the night express on the New York and New Haven Railroad, and stood for a moment hesitating, in front of the Grand Central Depot. The wind was whirling the snow in little gusts to the right, on Forty-second Street, and up Fourth Avenue; and flakes were falling so fast that I could scarcely see the horse-cars as they disappeared into the tunnel going down-town. It was one of the days when New Yorkers always take a surface-car, the elevated, or a cab, even if they have only three or four blocks to go. But I hadn't even a nickel in my pocket, and the friend I wanted to see lived on Elizabeth Street, just off the Bowery.

Without more delay, I buttoned my coat about my ears and struck out down Fourth Avenue to Cooper Union, and then along the Bowery to Hester Street, until I turned the corner which brought me directly in front of the tenement-house at No. 38 Elizabeth Street. I pushed open the door, and climbed the stairs to the third floor, and knocked at the door of the back room. In a few moments a young woman, with disordered hair, and a general appearance which showed that she had just arisen from her bed, answered my summons, and wanted to know why I knocked.

I asked if a man named "Mickey" Cobey lived there, and she said that he did; but had just gone down to the police court, at the Tombs, to try and get a girl out who had been arrested the day before.

Mickey was one of the Tombs court "hangers-around," a sort of a snide, who pretended to have a political pull, and got two or three, and sometimes even as high as five dollars, for getting people discharged who had been locked up. He never pretended to be a lawyer, but worked on the "inside," through friends of whatever judge happened to be on the bench.

I told the woman with whom Mickey was living that I was a friend of his, and if she didn't mind, I would sit down and wait until he came home. She said that was all right; and opening the door of a little cupboard, took out a bottle, and asked me if I would go down-stairs and get twenty-five cents'

worth of whisky. I told her that I didn't have any money; so she dived down into one of her stockings and produced a quarter, which she gave to me, and I got the whiskey. She fished out of the cupboard a couple of rather dirty lager beer glasses, and we were just finishing the liquor when somebody knocked at the door, and Mickey's woman shouted to come in.

The visitor proved to be James Harris, better known as "English Jim," a bank burglar who had done many a smart job. He was well dressed, wore a large solitaire diamond pin in his shirt-front, and had the appearance of a well-to-do Wall Street broker. I looked at him, and sized him up as a determined man who would stand no fooling with the cards. He closed the door carefully, stepped up to the woman, whom he called Lizzie, and asked where Mickey was.

As soon as his eye fell on me, he whispered in the woman's ear, and asked who that man was sitting on the lounge. She turned around, facing me, and replied that she didn't know, except that I was a friend of Mickey's and had just got out from the "jug," and was at present dead broke. Jim seemed to be thinking something over in his mind for a few moments, and then he took a seat on the sofa opposite me, and said:

"I called to see Mickey, and put him in the way of raising some boodle, but he is out. My name is 'English Jim,' and if you can keep your mouth shut,

I will give you a chance to make some money. I am not alone in this thing, but I will speak to my partners, and if they don't kick, I will be back and let you know."

I said I would be much obliged to him if he could put me on my feet, because I had been "doing time," and hadn't a "red."

Jim picked up his hat and went out, and Lizzie put on the tea-kettle, and began to arrange her toilette, for up to this time she had nothing on but her stockings and her night-dress. By the time the tea began to boil, she looked a good deal better, and would have been quite presentable but for a few small blotches in her face, which she was trying to putty up with some powder in front of a little piece of broken looking-glass. Pretty soon she went out with the bottle we had emptied, and came back again with a girl she introduced to me as Miss Woods, and I noticed with some satisfaction that the bottle was full of "booze."

Miss Woods looked rather the worse for wear. Her hair was unkempt, and her clothes looked very much as if they had been thrown at her, and stuck where they fell. She took a seat with me on the lounge, and told me she had been arrested the night before, but had just got off with a fine, the amount of which she had the good luck to have in her pocket. Lizzie did the honors by passing around the drinks, and I was about to apologize for not being able to set them up again on my own ac-

count, when the door opened, and English Jim returned.

He politely took off his hat, and told the girls that he was sorry, but they would have to excuse me for a little while, as we had some particular business to attend to. He then winked to me to go out with him, and I followed him down the stairs, and out into the street. We walked along Elizabeth Street until we came to Grand Street, where we turned to the right and entered a lager-beer saloon. Jim tipped a wink to the bar-tender as we went in, saying that I was all right, and to give me anything that I should call for, and he would settle the bill. He went out at once, with the remark that he was going to see his partners.

I called for a cigar, and sat down at one of the tables, when the bar-tender came up with a couple of glasses of brandy, and asked me to drink with him.

"It's a pretty sharp morning," said he, "and brandy is just about the right thing a day like this."

"It is quite fresh," said I, "and I don't mind if I do take a nipper."

"You are a very lucky man," continued the bar-tender, "in getting work with such gentlemen."

We were conversing about my hard luck, when the street door opened, and in walked English Jim, with three other men, who were as well-dressed as he. There was nothing about any of them that would indicate that they were anything but business men

of first-rate standing. The tallest of them was dressed in the height of fashion, with a high silk "dicer," a light beaver overcoat thrown wide open and showing a fine satin lining, and a pair of patent leather shoes. I sized him up at that time as being the boss of the gang, and I could see that he didn't want to make my acquaintance. He looked over my butternut-colored prison suit and rough brown overcoat, and then glanced at my beard, which hadn't been cut for two weeks before leaving prison.

Jim and he whispered together a minute or two, probably in consultation about me, and then they were all introduced to me, the first two as William and Frederick Knapp—two half-brothers, as I afterwards found them to be. The last one to be introduced was the stylish gentleman, who was known there as Charles Davis or "Yaller" Davis, familiar to the police throughout the United States as an expert crook, a fop, and a lover. He was pretty well known among criminals as the "Broadway Statue." After looking me over carefully and making a few general remarks about my appearance, and asking me how I liked being behind the bars, they told English Jim to take me around on the Bowery and buy me a shirt and collar and get me shaved and fixed up generally.

All of a sudden "Yalier" Davis kicked at my being let into the job, and said I would not do at all. They asked him why, but all he would answer

was that I wouldn't do. Billy Knapp, who seemed to be the leader, said very shortly:

"Well, if you don't like this man, you can go yourself."

I didn't know at that time where they wanted him to go, or what they were talking about, but I noticed that "Yaller" Davis looked like a white sun-flower and made no more kick. Jim took me around to the Bowery, as he had been arrested and bought me a shirt and a paper collar, for which he paid one dollar, putting in his pocket the rest of the change out of the five-dollar bill I saw Billy Knapp hand him. I also got a shave, which English Jim paid for, and we then returned to the house in Elizabeth Street, but instead of going up to Lizzie's rooms we went to number 6 on the floor below, which was kept by Kitty Gleason. Jim ordered me to put on the shirt, and be quick about it, too, as we had no time to lose. While I was arranging my toilette Miss Woods, whom I had met in the morning, came in with another girl named Mary Mahr. English Jim sent the "growler" out for beer, and told the girls to drink me good luck, because when I returned I should have money enough to dress them all in diamonds. He said to them that I was going to "lay down" a paper at the "jug," and pull off a good big trick. I said nothing, but followed Jim out again, and he told me that he had a very wealthy uncle in the upper part of the city, whose name was John Green, and who had a large bank account at

one of the Bowery banks. As his uncle was a heavy dealer in cattle, he frequently drew large checks, and Jim was going to play a trick by drawing a check on him for $1,950. He told me that if anybody stopped me in the bank—for he was going to trust me to draw the money—that he (Jim) would go to his uncle and square things up, telling him he had sent me with the check. He would go to the bank himself, he told me, only that his uncle had given orders to the cashier to cash no checks presented by his nephew James Harris.

By the time English Jim had finished this fairy tale we had reached the saloon in Grand Street where I had left the rest of the gang. Billy Knapp stepped up to me and told me to come along with him. As we walked along up the Bowery Billy took from his inner coat pocket a large leather pocket-book, such as business men generally carry when going to the bank to draw money. This he handed to me, and pointing over to the corner of the street he asked me if I saw the bank. He then said:

"Go over to it, and when you get inside, open your pocket-book, and you will find in it a check for $1,950, on a man named Green, made payable to bearer. You hand it to the cashier, and say Mr. Green requested you to get large bills."

I went across the street and into the bank, and my eye at once caught the sign lettered "Cashier," over a window. I stepped boldly up to the brass railing, opened my coat, and took out the pocket-

book. I spread the check out on the counter, and told the cashier that Mr. Green wanted me to ask for large bills. The cashier took the check, and in less time than I have taken to tell about it, he shoved out through the window the largest pile of money I had ever handled.

He asked me to tell Mr. Green that the bank was short of large bills that morning. Noticing that the pile was too big to fit the pocket-book, he told me to hand it back to him, and he would make it more convenient for me to carry. I passed it back through the window, and, I must say, my heart went up to my throat as I thought that was the last of it, though just why I thought so I don't quite know.

But in a moment or so the cashier handed it all back to me, nicely tied up in a strong piece of paper, and advised me to put it under my coat and button it tight. This I did, thanked the cashier, bid him good morning and hurried out of the bank.

To my surprise there was standing on the steps "Yaller" Davis. He said to me in an undertone:

"Follow down on this side after me."

When we had reached about the centre of the block he said:

"Give me the stuff."

I said, "What stuff?"

"Why, the boodle, of course, that you just got in the jug."

I stopped and looked at him saying, "I am not giving the dust up to you."

At this point English Jim came up behind us, saying, "Cross over and go down the Bowery until you get to Grand Street."

We did so, and at the latter place met Billy Knapp, who came up and shook hands, and in a very polite way asked if I got the check cashed all right. I told him that I had the boodle in my pocket, and I turned it over to him. He then told me to follow on with "Yaller" Davis, and I did so. I was very much afraid that Billy was going to "do me dirt" by giving me the slip after I had got the boodle; and I was also afraid that "Yaller" would punch me for not turning the dust over to him if I was not very careful. However, I kept my "lamps" pretty well peeled on both of them, and followed Billy up through Mott Street to the saloon down in the basement.

I hurried in and found a screen that hid the place from the view of passers-by in the street. I went on into the back room, in which I found eighteen or twenty men, all crooks, of different professions. The crooks began shouting to "Country," which was the bartender's nickname, to open the wine, but he paid no attention to their calls until Fred Knapp came out of a side room, and nodding to the bartender said, "All right, Country, open up some wine for the boys."

Then I learned for the first time that Billy and

Fred owned the saloon. Billy walked up to where I was sitting, and handing out a roll of bills, said:

"Take this; this is your share of the boodle because you drew it at the bank."

I counted the dust and found $300. Billy then introduced me to the crooks as one of the boys, and they all drank wine without limit at my expense. Billy, who seemed to take a kindly interest in me, then explained how the business was carried on.

CHAPTER II.

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE GANG.

BILLY was so well satisfied with the work I had done that he determined to introduce me to the rest of the gang. I had already met them all, he said, except the forger, who, as is always the case, is the main man, and keeps very thoroughly secluded from the rest of the gang. After the success, however, of this bit of enterprise I was duly made acquainted with a man called Phil Hargrave, who I was told was the man that did the pen-work.

This I afterward found not to be the case, for Hargrave was only a middle man and acted as go-between for the real forger and the rest of the gang. Such great care was taken, that none but Hargrave was ever permitted to meet the real pen-man, who on all occasions kept out of sight of everybody except the middle man. Hargrave's business was to carry the checks to the forger, who erased the original figures, and raised the value of the note or check to whatever amount he thought best.

The member of the gang who secured the check always made a point of finding out how the party stood at the bank, how much business he did, and

the amount of money he was accustomed to draw on his checks. In this way the forger was notified whether it would be safe to raise the amount to $1,000 only, or whether any suspicion would be raised if a $25 or a $30 check was raised to $2,500 or $3,000. The latter figure, $3,000, was the largest check I ever had any interest in while I was with the gang.

The common method of securing a check for the forger was this: Billy or Fred Knapp would hand fifty dollars to English Jim, "Yaller" Davis, or myself with the directions to go out and get a "paper"; if it was given to me, I would take the money and go to some firm, like Ridley & Sons, for instance, and look over their stock. Finally I would select dress goods to the amount of $20 or $25 and hand the clerk a fifty-dollar bill. At the same time I would ask him if he could conveniently give me the remainder of the cash in the form of a check, as I wished to remit the balance to a friend. It was always necessary to take great care and have the amount of the check an even number of dollars, because the forger complained that odd cents bothered him in his part of the work. In nine cases out of ten, after paying for the goods, the unsuspicious cashier of the establishment would have no hesitation in drawing a check for the balance of the money given him.

Having once secured a check of this kind with the signature of the firm upon it, it was promptly taken to either Billy or Fred Knapp, and the work of that

member of the gang who had secured the "paper" was done. Phil Hargrave was then sent for and the check turned over to him, and he disappeared and carried the check to the forger.

The pen-man or forger of our gang at that time was George Engell, well known throughout the United States as "The Dutchman," and an expert at his business. Engell inspected the check, and inquired of Hargrave how much of a raise the firm could stand without creating suspicion, and then went at his work. When he had completed his portion of the check, it was given Hargrave, and through him placed in Billy Knapp's hands, ready to be cashed. One of the members of the gang was then told what bank to take the check to, and he was expected to return with the money.

This branch of the business was called "laying down," and was the most dangerous work of all.

I did a great deal of it, and my "bit," as the portion which fell to each member of the gang was called, was proportionately larger than any of the rest on account of the danger. Everything depended, in a very large degree, upon the "layer-down," and he must be sure to be a man of cool nerve, who could approach the cashier of any bank with a business-like air, and meet any questions on the spur of the moment in such a manner as to inspire confidence and disarm any suspicion. In the event of trouble, he was of course the most exposed of any, and the one that was sure to be arrested. In

case of such a catastrophe as the arrest of the "layer down," the safety of the rest of the gang depended upon his complete secrecy as to where he got the check, and who his confederates were. Several times the "layer-down," was caught, but Billy Knapp always employed the best lawyers, and did everything that could be done to fight his case in Court.

As I have said, my cool nerve and success had struck the fancy of the rest of the gang, and I was in excellent standing. After introducing me to Phil Hargrave, Billy Knapp took me to one side and advised me to go out and buy a good-looking business suit, and also said it would greatly facilitate my work if I wore a high silk dicer and carried a gold watch and chain, which would give me the general air of a well-to-do business man. English Jim, who was standing by, overheard our conversation, and volunteered to go with me and buy my clothes. Billy replied with the remark that he guessed I was big enough to take care of myself. This didn't seem to please Jim, and he said all right, he didn't care, in a tone of voice which showed he was not much pleased. He bid good-bye to the boys, and remarked that he was going home.

I treated all hands in the saloon to cigars and drinks, told Billy that I had some business downtown, and went out. I jumped on a Fourth Avenue car, rode up to Cooper Union, and got off at Brokaw Brothers' clothing house. As I was looking over a suit of clothes I was surprised to see English Jim

walk up and remark that I could not do better than buy the suit I was looking at. I bought the suit and put it on, and paid for it, and was going to take my old suit home, when Jim suggested that I could have it sent down to the saloon in Mott Street and save bothering with it.

I never got that suit, and I found out afterwards that Jim sent a young fellow around to the store with an order for the clothes in my name, and probably sold them for what he could get.

Jim and I started down the Bowery until we came to a pawn-broker's shop that he said was a first-rate place to buy a watch and chain. We entered the store, and I selected a gold watch with a very showy chain, for which I paid eighty dollars. Meanwhile Jim had put a ring on his finger that he had been looking at, and coolly asked me if I would loan him $18 to pay for it, as he didn't have any money with him; remarking that his money had been given to his wife, and as soon as he got home he would repay me. Like a chump, I paid for the ring, and of course it is needless to say that he was only playing me for a sucker.

Continuing our journey down-town I dropped into a hat store and bought a high silk dicer and a derby, and returned about 6 o'clock to No. 38 Elizabeth Street. I went up into Kitty's room on the second floor and found quite a crowd of girls gathered there, very much as if they were waiting for my arrival. Of course I sent out for beer, brandy, and everything

else they wanted, and we soon became very convivial. I pulled off my coat and made myself quite at home, and noticed that there were several very wistful and envious faces watching me all the time. I didn't know until that afternoon that I was so good-looking as the girls told me I was, but I rather think that it was not so much myself as my money they were after.

After sitting for about half an hour or so, I began to feel drowsy, and one of the young girls, "Jew Sarah," they called her, came and sat down by the side of me and invited me to go up to her rooms on the floor above and rest myself. English Jim and Kitty both spoke up and said, "Go on, Sam; Jew Sarah will treat you all right." As I was feeling rather tired I went into her room and laid down to take a nap, and in a few moments I was asleep.

It could not have been long before I was awakened by feeling somebody trying to turn me over. I shouted out at once that some one was trying to rob me, and although it was quite dark I could distinguish the form of a man passing out of the door. As the noise I made brought in Jim and several of the girls, who asked what the matter was, I told them that somebody had been in the room and was trying to get at my pocket-book, but they tried to laugh the matter off by saying that I had been dreaming that the police were after me. They wanted me to try and get to sleep again, but I was very thoroughly

awakened, and insisted upon getting up and joining the crowd once more.

We were all sitting about and discussing what Jim said was my scare, when a knock came at the door, and in came Mickey, who rushed up to me and made a great fuss, and said his wife Lizzie had just told him that I had been around to see him, and he was very sorry he had missed me. He then said that I had had a great streak of luck in being in his room when English Jim called; if I hadn't been there, he said, English Jim would have waited for him, and then he would have got the bit out of the check instead of me. On the strength of this, Mickey struck me for the loan of a hundred "bones," and I had to tell him that he was too fresh.

Then Mickey again said that I was ungrateful, and that if I hadn't been in his rooms I would never have had the chance to make the "bit." I told him that was true, and also said that he never would have dared to have laid the check down even if he had the chance. He said I was a liar, and I jumped up and struck him between the eyes. The blow was a surprise to him, and if I hadn't been drinking I should never have struck him, but it brought us both to our senses, and we shook hands. Then Mickey admitted to me that he never would have dared to have laid down the check for a thousand times the amount of the money that I made out of it.

He confided to me that English Jim had told him all about it and advised him to try and bleed me for

a hundred dollars. I turned to Jim and told him that it was none of his business to take care of my money, and if he would stop and think, he would see that I was getting down very rapidly into my last hundred. This brought on some hard words between Jim and me, and we would probably have had a fight if Mickey had not interfered and advised Jim to go home.

Pretty soon Mickey went out, and the girls began to dispute among themselves about which one of them was going to look out for my welfare and comforts until next day. I soon settled that part of the trouble by taking Kitty to one side, and telling her that the other girls might go home. Kitty then said that Jim and she had had a row, and he had told her she would have to look out for herself, as he intended to leave the city for a week or two and keep shady. Jim had the cool nerve to tell her that probably I would give her some money and pay the rent that was due, if she asked me. Well, as I had made no provision for a hotel or room of any kind, I told her she need not worry about her rent, and that I would be her friend, or the friend of any young girl who was so hard pressed for money as she was, and had been made the dupe of such hard-hearted scoundrels as English Jim. After a round of drinks the girls went home, and Kitty and I went to Crook's restaurant on the Bowery, and had a good, substantial supper. After our meal I went round to Kitty's rooms, and was very glad to get a good night's rest at the end of my very eventful day's work.

CHAPTER III.

TEACHING "ENGLISH JIM" A WHOLESOME LESSON.

NEXT morning I got up about half-past 8 feeling very much refreshed, except that I had a big head. I went at once to Knapp's saloon on Mott Street and had a good stiff cocktail, and started out to get breakfast. Just outside the saloon I met a well-dressed, stylish-looking man, who slapped me on the shoulder, and asked me if I didn't remember him. He said he was John Fogarty, and that he had met me in two or three saloons the day before when I was setting up drinks for the crowd, but probably I didn't remember him. We walked along a few blocks, and I invited him to go in and have a drink. I paid for two or three drinks and then said I was going to get breakfast. Fogarty said that was what he was going to do also, and I invited him round to Crook's restaurant to have something to eat. While we were getting breakfast our conversation turned on English Jim Harris, and I told my new friend the way he had acted towards me, not forgetting his borrowing the money for the ring, and putting Mickey Cobey up to the job of trying to bleed me for a hundred dollars. He burst out roaring

with laughter, and stated that both of the men were dead beats, and they would try to get what they could out of me. Jim, he said, would bulldoze anybody who would let him, and, in fact, had tried to bulldoze him, but found he had mistaken his man. Since then, Fogarty said, English Jim had given him a wide berth.

He advised me to get a gun, as the crooks always call a pistol, and if Jim attempted any more of his funny business, to pull out the gun and give him a bluff, or, if necessary, to "bore" him in the leg once. When we had finished breakfast, Fogarty and I walked round to Knapp's saloon, and as it was early there were only half a dozen in the back room. Two or three of these were curled up in chairs and on tables, and they were all crooks. Among them were Pat and Jim Hagerty, and Johnny Carr, a well-known expert pickpocket, together with "Big-mouthed Scotty," who could pick a pocket-book out of the inside of your vest about as neatly as anybody I ever saw.

Fogarty waked up all hands, remarking that the saloon was not a lodging-house, and he would be obliged if they would get up and let gentlemen like himself and me sit down and read the newspapers before going to work. Before long Billy and Fred Knapp came in, and other crooks soon filled up the saloon. Fogarty told the two Knapps of the manner in which English Jim had treated me, and they remarked that they knew he was treacherous and

tricky, but never thought he would try any of his funny business on one of the gang. Billy had a great laugh over the attempt to rob me in Jew Sarah's rooms, and said he would stake his pocket-book that, if the truth was known, it was none else than Jim himself who put up the job to have me go to Jew Sarah's rooms, and when he thought I was asleep tried to go through me. After some consultation, they determined, in view of all the facts, to count English Jim out of the gang; that is, when the next paper was to be laid down, they decided not to let him know anything about it.

Billy then went behind the bar and took out of a drawer a very nice six-shooter, already loaded, and handed it to me, saying:

"Here, Sam, this belongs to a young fellow who has just been sent up the river. If he sends for it, or any of his friends, I will make it all right with him. You stick it into your hip-pocket, and when Jim comes in here this morning, or the first time he gives you any of his funny business, you get just as independent as he is. You had better manage to stand up beside him at the bar, and if he gives you any more lip, pull out your gun on the quiet, and hold it behind him, pointing down to the floor. Then fire one of the barrels, and explain to him, if he wants to know what you meant, that you were only trying to see if it was loaded all right. If you do this I will bet he will give you a wide berth in the future."

There being nothing on hand for that day, I told

Bill I guessed I would go down and see how the girls were getting on. He told me all right, but to take care of myself, and be sure and drop in before 9 o'clock in the evening. At that hour, he said, he usually went home, and would know whether we would have any business to do next day. I filled my pockets with some good cigars and went down to my rooms on Elizabeth Street, where I found Kitty up and dressed, with the fire made, the room swept and dusted, and everything in fine order. I gave Kitty a ten-dollar note, and told her to go out and buy some dishes and cooking-utensils, and something for breakfast and dinner.

After Kitty went out I strolled down the back stairs into the dive in the basement, where the old Dutchman Degenhardt kept a saloon and collected the rent of the house. I told him that I would be responsible for the rent, and he said that he guessed English Jim was looking for me to pick a row. I replied that I was not very much afraid of Jim, because he was a bully and a coward. I had hardly made the remark when the door opened and in walked Jim himself, and gave me a rather surly good-morning, and asked me to take a drink.

I said, No; that I was not feeling any too well, and hoped he would excuse me.

Jim replied that he thought I was putting on airs.

I said that I guessed not, and that nobody could compel me to drink if I didn't want to. He replied that I might suit myself, but that I would find out

before very long that I would not have things all my own way. I could see that he was getting mad and looking for a row, so, as we were standing at the bar side by side, I threw my right hand around under the tail of my coat in such a way that my fingers just touched the handle of my revolver. He soon began abusing me; and thinking of what Billy had suggested, I drew my revolver very quietly and held it behind his back, and fired one of the chambers down into the floor of the room.

At the report of the revolver Jim jumped half-way up to the ceiling. Of course the noise made quite a sensation, and people began to run in from the street, and to inquire who was killed and what was up. Among them was Hughy Kelly, better known as "Blinkey," a notorious "Knuck." Jim asked me, in a frightened sort of way, if I was trying to shoot him, and I said:

"Oh, no; only making sure that the gun was in order and loaded."

He said it was a very funny way of finding out, and I replied that I didn't know of any better way, and was perfectly satisfied with my experiment. Jim glanced around the room very nervously and asked all hands up to the bar to drink, saying that it was getting too hot for him in there and he guessed he would go home. I was very well satisfied with my bluff on Jim, and throwing down a five-dollar bill on the counter, told old Degenhardt to let the boys and girls drink it up, as I thought I had

done mischief enough for one morning. Degenhardt remarked that I had done just right, and scared Jim away from ever bothering me any more.

Kitty had got back by this time with a large new basket, big enough for a family, and a little behind her came a boy loaded down with parcels and groceries. As she came into the saloon I took the basket from her, and we went up into our room. Then I told her all that had happened, and she remarked that she was glad nobody was hurt, but hoped I would not do such a thing again, as I might get arrested. She put the kettle on the stove and soon had a cup of coffee and a very good dinner cooking. My friend Blinkey then came in, and we all sat down to the meal together. While we were eating, Kitty told me that a couple of girls who were friends of hers wanted to know if they could board with us. She said they had rooms of their own, but wanted to come to our rooms to get their table-board. I told her to board them, by all means, and I should be glad to have them for company.

After dinner I went around to the dive on Mott Street, and as soon as I entered Billy Knapp and the rest of the crooks began to laugh. They told me that English Jim had been there a couple of hours before and solemnly told them I had tried to shoot him. They gave him the grand laugh, and told him he had mistaken his man this time when he took me for a chump. Jim went away mad, declaring that he was through with the whole gang.

I laughed, and said I thought I had done everybody a great service by picking a row with Jim, and invited the whole crowd up to the bar to have a drink. Among the crooks sitting around were "Shang" Campbell and Abe Cockley and many others. Billy asked me how my money was holding out, and said he thought at the rate I was spending it I must be pretty nearly broke. I hunted through my pockets, and found that I had exactly $3.40 out of the $300 he had given me the day before as my "bit" from the forged check. Billy took out a roll of bills from his pocket and handed me a twenty-dollar note, saying that I might have use for it that night, and that to-morrow the gang would lay down another check, but not to let Harris know that the gang was going to do any business the next day. I promised to be sure to be around at the saloon early and to go and get a night's rest. I said good-night to the crowd and went back to the house and took Kitty to the theatre. After the show we had a late supper and then went back to our rooms.

CHAPTER IV.

HARDSHIPS OF PROFESSIONAL CRIMINALS.

BRIGHT and early the next day I was up and ready for the business that Billy said he would have on hand. I dressed with particular care, brushed my new silk dicer, burnished my new watch, went out for a shave, and had my shoes shined. Then I returned to the house and had a cup of coffee with Kitty, after which I went round to the saloon on Mott Street. Billy Knapp was waiting for me, and told me to go up to a certain corner on the Bowery, where I would see a bank. He told me particularly to take up a position on the opposite side of the street, where I could watch everybody who went in and out of the building. I was to keep a sharp look-out for a man named Billy Singleton, who was one of the gang, and upon whom it devolved to lay down the paper that day. When he should leave the bank Knapp told me not to lose sight of him, but if he came out with a policeman, or there were any indications of trouble, I was to make myself scarce, because the neighborhood would be unhealthy for a week or so.

We had a round of drinks, and I was soon nicely hidden behind a curtain in a bar-room on the corner

opposite the bank. I bought a cigar and lighted it to avoid suspicion, and in a few moments saw Singleton pass up the steps and enter the building. In about five minutes he came out, and leisurely walked to the centre of the street, where he jumped on a passing horse-car. I caught the car at the next corner, and observed that Billy Knapp was on the front platform. We each paid our fare as we rode down-town, but made no signs of recognition. Billy gave the signal to get off just in front of a corner liquor store, which we all entered. Singleton at once turned over the boodle he had received from the forged check to Knapp, while the latter explained to me that he would divide it up before we returned to the Mott Street saloon, in order that Jim Harris might not suspect that the gang had done any business that day. I don't remember how much the check amounted to, but I know that my bit was $250. This sum came in very conveniently to me, as I had already spent the entire amount of my first day's earnings.

I don't pretend to justify my conduct in working with this gang, but the reader can understand that the money was made so easily that it was a great temptation for me to continue in the business. I knew that it was wrong, but I had no means of earning a living, and I hoped, by being very cautious, to avoid arrest until I could lay up a sufficient sum to retire from this dangerous profession. I thought myself very lucky to have fallen in with such an

expert and successful gang as the one ruled over by Billy Knapp. I had many friends who were bank-burglars, house-breakers, sneak-thieves, and pick-pockets, and I well knew the great danger, hard work, and small earnings of their various professions.

Burglars as a rule—I mean particularly house-breakers—work harder and with less profit than any other class of thieves. They are constantly exposed to the danger of arrest, and are liable at any time to have to face the muzzle of a revolver at a most unexpected moment. When a house-breaker enters a room his first business is to ransack the bureau drawers for jewelry and other valuables, and if there is nothing in them that is worth while taking, he must next turn to the clothes-press. A dress or a coat that is of any value is bulky, and very difficult to carry away from the premises. If there is nothing in the wardrobe that repays the trouble of carrying away, the last resort is the silverware. Here again a large bag is required, and the value of the haul depends upon the weight. Nothing is more difficult than for a burglar to get away with a sack full of silverware, and half the time, when he goes to melt it down, he finds that he has been fooled with plated stuff.

Hundreds of my friends have told me that they averaged, in nine cases out of ten, to leave a house with little or nothing of value. The burglar runs the risk of detection at any moment, and may unexpectedly run across somebody in the house whom he has aroused. After he has gotten safely

away with his "swag," he must then dispose of it on the best terms he can make with some "fence" or pawn-broker. There never was a burglar yet who didn't get cheated to death by these blood-suckers. They know very well that the burglar is in fear every moment of arousing the suspicion of somebody, and he must get rid of his swag just as quickly as possible. Under these circumstances they give him about one-fifth of what the things are worth, and he is obliged to accept almost any terms that they offer him. I think it is a fair estimate to say that the average burglar is making fair wages when he gets from $20 to $25 a week. Of course expert bank-burglars and safe-robbers make thousands of dollars out of a single job, but then, on the other hand, there are thousands of pickpockets and sneak-thieves who never make over $15 a week from one year's end to another. The pickpocket, unless he has marked a man, and knows that his victim carries a valuable watch or a well-filled "leather," nine times out of ten, after going through him and disposing of his swag with "a fence," finds that he has only a five-dollar bill for his trouble. A watch that a crook gets $5 or $10 for must be a first-class and very valuable time-piece. Besides all this, the pick-pocket is very likely to be discovered at any moment, and the evidence against him is pretty sure to always convict him. In those days the pickpocket was liable to get twenty years' imprisonment, while the business I was in would entitle me at that time

to only two years. Of course all this has been changed, and the penalties are much heavier for laying down checks than they used to be.

But to return to the thread of my story. After receiving my bit of the boodle, I had a drink with Singleton, and returned to my rooms with Kitty. As I passed in through the bar-room in the basement I found two of the girls, Miss Woods and Jew Sarah, having a war of words with Degenhardt, the Dutchman, about their room-rent. It seemed that they were a few weeks behind in their rent, as is frequently the case with women of their class, and the Dutchman, shaking his fist at them, said that he wanted either the money or their rooms. As I had a good round sum in my pocket I quietly settled the dispute, and made all hands happy by paying up what was due, and advancing the rent for two weeks. The Dutchman swore that I was a good fellow, if ever he had seen one, and set up the drinks for all hands. Then I went up to see Kitty, and told her of the success of our last "paper," and gave her $25, which I thought was enough for the time being. I advised her to go out and get herself some wearing apparel, or put the money away, just as she saw fit. The girl cried out of gratitude, and gave me a hug and an affectionate kiss.

After a few minutes in the room, I went over into Knapp's saloon, where I met the usual congregation of crooks, with the exception of English Jim, who was missing. "Yaller" Davis, they told me, had

shifted his stamping-ground to the west side, around Third Street, where he had taken up quarters with some pickpockets. The conversation very soon drifted toward "Yaller," and it transpired that he was working for two gangs at the same time, and, as the result of his foolish ambition to do double work, had exposed himself, and had got the "collar" in a down-town bank. He was railroaded up to Sing Sing for a five years' sentence, where he had plenty of time to think his career over. In fact, he thought about it so seriously that, one day, while he was working in the stone-shed, in the north part of the prison-yard, he got behind some timber, and continuing in the shadow, walked down to the main building, and sneaked out the side of the archway that spans the Hudson River Railroad. Just at that time he knew that the express was coming down the river, and he managed in some way to drop on the roof of the flying train as it came along. It was almost miraculous, but he received no injury then, and was probably safely concealed in one of his old haunts in New York before he was missed at the prison.

Our gang had been so successful with every venture, and we all had so much pocket-money, that Billy Knapp thought it would be wise for us to keep under cover for the next few days. I had plenty of idle time on my hands, and usually spent my mornings at Knapp's saloon, where Johnny Dobbs, the bank-burglar, "Big Fogharty," and I generally

had breakfast. I was in the habit of going to a butcher's down the street, and getting three cross-ribbed steaks, which Fogharty always said was the sweetest part of the meat; we considered him an expert in this case, as he was at one time a butcher, or a butcher's clerk, himself. There was an old-fashioned bar-room stove in the back room, and we used to lay the steaks on the coals and just heat them through. Then we each had a tin pie-plate, on which we had formerly bought pies and forgotten to return; and from those we ate the steaks, with a raw Bermuda onion and a little bread and butter for relish. I can taste those steaks now, it seems to me; and I declare they beat all the French cooking in Delmonico's that I ever ate. During the afternoon I frequently loafed around the Dutchman's saloon at 38 Elizabeth Street, and played cards with half a dozen crooks who used to hang out in his back room.

I was sitting there playing cards one day, when a young man, with a light mustache and blond hair and plainly dressed, came down the basement steps and into the saloon, asking for a man named Woods, whom the Dutchman told him had recently been sent up the river to Sing Sing.

The fellow told me that he was a friend of Woods, and had just come on from the West. I took quite a fancy to him, and asked him to have a drink. In the course of our conversation he told me his name was William Primrose, and he related to me how he and

a friend of his had come very near getting lynched out West, where they were caught robbing an express-train that they had held up after the good old-fashioned highwayman's method on the Plains. They were taken to the nearest tree, ropes put around their necks, which were thrown over the branches, and then they were pulled up about six feet from the ground, and the ropes tied to the trunk of the tree. The passengers all left, to return to the train, when, fortunately for them, one of the more kindly hearted of them ran back and cut them down, and told them to run for their lives; and, as Primrose said, they had been running ever since—for it was six weeks before that they had had their narrow escape, and in the intervening time they had been on the tramp to New York City.

I told him a few of my experiences, and, as it was getting towards bedtime, asked him where he was going to stay for the night, and how he was fixed in regard to boodle. As I supposed, he said he was strapped, and I loaned him $5, giving him the address of Knapp's store in Mott Street, and requesting him to meet me there in the forenoon at 9 o'clock. He told me very earnestly that he was open to any job that would make him a dollar, and I assured him that I would either fix him up myself, or send him to a man across-town who would set him to work.

Next morning my new friend met me at Knapp's saloon, as he had promised, and while we were in

conversation, Bill Bartlett dropped in and asked me if I knew where he could get a good man to lay down a "paper" for him. I said "Yes," and at once introduced him to Primrose; and he and Bartlett, after a little conversation, came to terms, and Bill left. Primrose called me to one side, and said that, if nothing happened, he would meet me at the Dutchman's, on Elizabeth Street that night about 6 o'clock. I had a few drinks at Knapp's, and then, there being nothing to occupy my mind, I took a stroll down to the Tombs police court, out of curiosity, to watch the judge dispose of the morning calendar. I got a seat among the crowd who always fill the benches at the Tombs, and pitied the poor unfortunates who were so unlucky as to fall into the grip of the law.

Alas! how little did I suspect that before twenty-four hours should have elapsed, that I myself would be standing waiting for the decision of the little judge.

It occurs to me, now, that I probably would not have been so fond of watching the other unfortunates, and observing their misery, if I had had any idea that I would have been in the same hole on the following day. But when a man is leading a crooked life, and living by his wits, as I was then, he never knows how soon his turn may come; and he is wiser to keep away from the courts, and not parade himself in the face and eyes of the officers of the law.

CHAPTER V.

ARRESTED ON SUSPICION OF STEALING $1,650.

ACCORDING to my agreement to meet Primrose at the Dutchman's at 6 o'clock in the evening, I strolled in, and began playing a game of cards until he should arrive. I had only been there a few moments, when, sure enough, in came my new friend with a new suit of clothes, a high silk dicer, and the general appearance of having pulled off a good trick. He said:

"Hallo, Sam, how can I square up with you for your kindness in putting me in the way of retrieving my fortunes?"

"By not mentioning it," I replied, modestly.

"Well, Dutchy," said Primrose, "give us the best there is in the house; and, Sam, have you anything particular on hand for to-night?" he asked.

"No," I replied; "nothing that will not keep until morning."

I then told the Dutchman to let Kitty know that I had gone up-town with Primrose, and to try and not let her get drunk, if he could help it. We then went out to the street, and around the corner to the Bowery, and jumped on a Third Avenue car, riding

as far as Fourteenth Street. Here we got off, and went into John Branston's liquor saloon. The proprietor was a stranger to me; but I noticed that he shook hands with Primrose, so that I judged they must be old friends. We had a small bottle of Piper Heidsieck, and Primrose fell to discussing a certain girl who used to live around there, and who, it seemed, was also an old acquaintance. Branston said that he would have the girl there by 11 o'clock, sure; and Primrose proposed that we stroll over to Twenty-third Street and Eighth Avenue and look in at Jim Fisk's theatre, where they were playing "Around the World." We enjoyed the play, but Primrose seemed anxious about the girl, and we left before the last act had commenced. As the snow had fallen while we were in the theatre, we took a cross-town car on our way back to Branston's, and Primrose advised me to button up my coat, as he had noticed two or three pickpockets were going through the passengers.

I paid no attention at the time, but when I got off the car at Third Avenue, to my astonishment I found that my watch-chain was dangling down and my vest-pocket was empty. Primrose laughed, and said he thought the gang of men who boarded the car with the crowd from the Fourteenth Street Theatre had "done me dirt." Branston laughed when he heard of my misfortune, and asked me for a description of the men whom I suspected, and said if it was the gang of which Billy Dewey was the

leader, he would try and get the watch back for me in about an hour's time. And, sure enough, while we were talking, in came this gang of "knucks," but neither Primrose nor I knew any of them. Just at this time the girl Primrose had been looking for entered, and we three adjourned to a private supper-room. In a few moments he brought in the gang of "knucks" who had swiped my clock, and introduced me to them as one of Knapp's Mott Street gang. The pickpockets all apologized for having taken the time-piece, and we had a round of drinks. It was nearly 3 o'clock in the morning when we started for my room in Elizabeth Street, and Primrose insisted upon the girl going along.

How well do I remember that morning! The snow had fallen to the depth of about a foot, and there was not a horse-car within sight. As we reached the corner of Hester Street and the Bowery, whom should I see but my own Miss Kitty, in conversation with a man. Without saying a word, I walked up behind him and dumped him into the snow, and then gave Kitty a lesson with the toe of my shoe, ordering her to go home.

Primrose and I followed after her, down into the basement dive, and had a drink all round; but Kitty refused to go up-stairs to her room until I went out and bought her a lunch. When I returned, Primrose's girl was sitting in the saloon, and informed me that she had been up-stairs with Kitty, but had been frightened out by hearing a man moving about in

the room next to mine. He was making a kick with somebody, and shouting that he wanted his money, or he would break somebody's neck. Kitty, she said, had dropped down on the lounge and gone off into a drunken sleep, leaving her alone. I thought the girl must be crazy, and I wasn't very much delighted at the thought of a man being in my private apartments. I rushed up-stairs, opened the door, and, in the first room, noticed a little child, about fourteen months old, peacefully sleeping on the bed. Kitty was curled up, snoring, on the sofa. As the fire had gone out, and it was pretty cold, I threw some blankets over the child, and then myself heard the man's voice in the next room. In another moment the door opened and this man appeared, with the remark that he wanted his money then and there, or there was going to be a row. It somewhat took me by surprise, and I asked him what the matter was. He informed me, in no gentle tones, that he had been "done up" in my rooms to the tune of $1,650, and he had just about made up his mind that he would not wait much longer to get the boodle back, either.

I could not understand how anything of the kind had happened, and what he was doing in my rooms; so I asked him for further explanations, remarking that I would like to know what he was doing in an honest man's rooms at 6 o'clock in the morning, making a fuss about being robbed, and alarming the people in the house. He told me his name was John Rog-

ers, and that he was a Chicago merchant. He was out walking on the Bowery at 11 o'clock the evening before, when a girl approached him with a child in her arms (who proved to be Kitty's cousin). She told him a pitiful story about being a widow, whose husband had deserted her, with a baby on her hands, and she wanted somebody to escort her to her cousin's home on Elizabeth Street. Rogers admitted that he was pretty full at the time, and having nowhere to go, consented to accompany the girl. They hailed a car and proceeded directly to my rooms. His recollection was rather hazy about what hour it was when he reached the house, but he remembered that Kitty was asleep on the lounge, and an empty bottle of whisky was on the table. Kitty's cousin fixed him up a drink of some kind, and in a few moments he became very sleepy and started to go out. The girl told him to go to the inner room and lie down until he got sobered up. That was all he remembered until he was awakened in the gray of the morning by the noise of somebody singing out in the hallway. He began feeling in his pockets for his money, and at once discovered that he had been done up.

When he had told me this story I gave evidence of being impatient, and informed him that he ought to be ashamed of himself for telling me such a yarn as that, to account for his being in the house with my wife. This made him very mad, and he began to yell "Police!" "Murder!" and various other fool-

ish things. I tried to quiet him, and told him that I had been out all night, as usual, and that my business was night-watchman at one of the docks on the East River. I knew nothing about his robbery, nor about the woman he claimed had enticed him into the room. The woman lying on the lounge I said was my wife, and I would ask her about it. I tried to arouse Kitty, but she was altogether too much under the influence of liquor to be waked up. Not knowing just what to do, and wanting to get the man out of the house, I told him that we would go right around to the Police Station and make a complaint, and I would try and find the money for him with the aid of the police who might search the house. During my dispute with Rogers, my dear friends Primrose, Mickey Cobey, the Dutchman, and a few other lodgers in the house stood in their doors and out in the hall listening to what was going on, but making no effort to help me out of the scrape.

We went down stairs, and I led him along Canal Street in the opposite direction from the Police Station, walking around the block two or three times to try and mix him up. As we came to the corner of the Bowery and Canal Street, I saw the night bartender of a saloon, whom I knew, standing in the doorway. He wanted to know if I had got lost, or how I happened to be up so early in the morning. He asked us in to have a drink, and I told him the story the man had given me.

The bartender, who was a friend of mine, looked

at Rogers pretty sharply, and wanted to know what sort of a bluff he was giving me, any way. Rogers got mad, and the bartender picked up a bottle and made a pretence of going around the bar to hit him. This frightened the Chicago drummer so much that he rushed out into the street and said he would find the Police Station himself. The bartender advised me to go into the back room and lie down by the fire, for if I went home Rogers would follow me and ask the first policeman he met to give me the collar.

I took his advice, and curled up on the lounge to try and get to sleep. I had been lying down perhaps fifteen minutes when I heard the saloon door open and three or four men enter. The bartender called out in a loud voice, so that I could hear it:

"Hallo, Detective, to what am I indebted to you for this call so early in the morning?"

"I am around looking for a man on a complaint just made up at the Station House," said the officer, who proved to be Detective Brennan, of the Fourteenth Precinct, and who had three patrolmen with him.

"What's the man's name?" asked the bartender, innocently.

"They call him 'Sam,'" said the Detective, "and he keeps a woman named Kitty Gleason, around at 38 Elizabeth Street."

"Well," said the bartender, "I think I know who you mean, but he has not been in here to-night that I remember of."

"Well, I will just take a look around," said the detective, as he caught sight of me in the back room:

"That isn't the man," said the bartender, stepping up to me boldly; "he's a waiter in an oyster house over on Grand Street, and he has been sleeping in there for a couple of hours."

The detective didn't come any closer, but soon left, saying that he thought he would go up to 38 Elizabeth Street and pull all hands in. I found out afterwards that Brennan did just what he said he would, and walked the whole crowd over to the Station-House, including Kitty, Mickey Cobey, Mary Woods, and Jew Sarah. Primrose and his girl, luckily for them, had skipped out just before the raid was made, and the Dutchman, claiming that he was asleep, and his saloon closed all night, avoided being pulled in. The bartender told me, after Detective Brennan had left, that Rogers might come round there any time and recognize me, so I had better get out as soon as I could. I put on my coat and went round to the dive in Mott Street, where I woke up "Country," the bartender, and told him the trouble I was in. It was not very long, however, before a man came running in with a message from the bar-keeper over on Canal Street, saying that the cops had been round there again, with Mickey Cobey as a guide, to try and identify me. Mickey had kindly suggested that I would very likely be over in Knapp's saloon, and he thought Brennan would be

over there before long looking for me. He had no sooner gotten the words out of his mouth than in walked the cops, with Cobey behind.

"I want that man Sam," said the detective. "Where is he?"

"I don't know who you mean," replied Country, going out from behind the bar. "It strikes me you are pretty fresh coming around here with a gang of cops at this time in the morning looking for a man. Nobody in this saloon ever bothered you."

"That's all right," said Detective Brennan; "that man is in here, and I have come to take him."

During this conversation I was making my best efforts to get the key to turn in the back door, so as to let myself into the yard. If I could have done that I could have gone through a panel door into a store on the next block, occupied by a well-known "fence" named John Greenthal. But while I was trying to make the lock work Brennan came into the back room, and said:

"Hold up, there, I want you! You are one of that gang of forgers the Police Headquarters' men are looking for. Now, you come along quietly, or I will bore you."

With this last remark the detective pulled out a gun, and I made no objection to going over to the Station-House with him. It really happened in this case, of course, that I was innocent, but it would have been foolish for me to have resisted him. I protested that I was innocent, as I really was, and

told him I would make it all right with the Captain at the Station-House. Just as we were leaving the saloon Fred Knapp came in, and wanted to know what all the cops were doing in his place. When Brennan explained to him he got very mad, because he knew that I had been up-town all night and could not have committed the robbery. He had met Billy Dewey, the pickpocket who had swiped my watch on a cross-town car, and had heard from him all about his meeting me in Branston's saloon on Fourteenth Street. Knowing that I was innocent, Fred advised me, finally, to go along with the officers, and promised to be down at the Tombs when my case came up, and see that I was discharged right away. I asked Fred to help me on with my overcoat, and managed to give him my revolver out of my hip pocket, as I knew it would be a bad thing to have it found on me when they searched me at the station-house.

CHAPTER VI.

A PRISONER IN THE TOMBS.

WHEN I got down to the Precinct Station-House, there I saw the whole mob lined up in front of the sergeant at the desk. Everybody from the house on Elizabeth Street was there except the Dutchman. Rogers, the complainant, told the Captain he recognized me, and the Captain asked me if I recognized any of the other prisoners.

I said, "No."

Then the Captain asked Cobey if he knew me, and Cobey replied, "Yes, I know him; he lives on the floor underneath me with that girl Kitty, over there."

"He is my husband," Kitty spoke up, who happened to be holding the fourteen-months'-old baby in her arms, which the cops had brought along, because they didn't know what to do with it, and didn't dare to leave it all alone in the cold when they pulled everybody that was in the house. That circumstance made it more interesting for me when the Captain said:

"I suppose he is the father of that child too." This made me mad, because I saw the game Kitty was trying to work. She wanted to get a hold on

me, and claim me for her husband because I had been living with her, and then she would have somebody to support her. Things already looked pretty black, and I thought I was getting pretty hard hit, in view of the fact that I was not Kitty's husband, was not father of the baby, and hadn't stolen the money. I concluded that it was best to give the Captain a straight deal and make a clean breast, in the hope that he might believe me and discharge me; so I started in and told him the truth about what my relations were with Kitty, and that I had been absent from the house at the time when Rogers lost his money.

As a mild sort of bluff I asked the Captain if he would not send me down to the Tombs to let me explain to the Judge, so that I might clear myself of such an outrageous charge.

"Oh, certainly," said the Captain, "by all means! you shall have every opportunity to clear your innocent character from this dreadful charge. Detective, search the whole gang and take them down to the Tombs."

In a few minutes we were on our way to court. As we passed the House of Detention I had a shiver for fear I might be seen by my poor old father, who at that time was a policeman and attached to the House of Detention, which stood next door to the Fourteenth Precinct Station-House. He hadn't seen me for several years, and I was afraid that it would be just my luck to have him

looking out of the window as I passed by. Fortunately I was spared this little scene. When we reached the court-room the Judge was just getting through the morning calendar. Rogers stepped up and made his complaint, and told the same story to the Judge that he had told me. Of course, when he said that I was the husband of the woman that he suspected had robbed him, the Judge held me for trial. We all pleaded "not guilty," but that made no difference, and I was bound over in $5,000 bail to answer to the Grand Jury. He might just as well have fixed the bail at $150,000, because I had no friend who was willing to put up any large sum for my sake. Rogers, I was pleased to note, was committed to the House of Detention, so as to make sure that he would be on hand to prosecute us when the case came up for trial.

It was the first time in my life that I had ever been an inmate of the Tombs prison, to stay more than a couple of hours, since one year before, when I was arrested for knocking a man's hat off with a snow-ball. As I now recollect my first visit to the old prison, I remembered an incident that occurred there which I witnessed, which makes me smile. In the cell next to me there were locked up two notorious pickpockets, who were known as "Jersey Jimmy," and "Whitey Bob." In those days the lawyers were allowed free access to the prison, and they could walk around to any of the cells to talk to the prisoners. On this occasion, while I was waiting

for my case to come up, a lawyer who was employed by "Jersey Jimmy" came in to hold a consultation with the pickpocket about his case. While he was standing in front of the cell talking to him, this light-fingered expert relieved his counsel of his watch and chain, and then disposed of it to a friend and paid this same lawyer his fee out of the money he received from the stolen watch. The lawyer got him discharged, but didn't find out until after the pickpocket was free that he had been paid his counsel fee out of the proceeds of the sale of his own watch. I saw the transaction from my cell, but said nothing about it, as it was none of my business to interfere in a matter between counsel and client.

But to return to my story. Next morning Billy Knapp came in to see me, and told me that he had employed Counselor Mott to defend my case, and had done everything that was possible for me. The scheme was to get me down to City Hall before some Judge on a writ of *habeas corpus*, so that I would not have to be locked up. My unfortunate escapade, he stated, had knocked things all on the head in relation to the check that was to have been laid down on that day. Even if I got out, it would not do for me to try it, and he wanted to know if I could tell him of anybody whom it was safe to trust with the job. I gave him the name of John Burke, a man who had suspected how I was making so much money, and had repeatedly asked me if I would give him a chance to make some boodle for himself some

day. Billy said he would go to the saloon where this man hung out, and if Burke looked all right he would have a talk with him and let him lay down the paper.

It was Christmas week, and a dreary time for me. Many of the high courts were not in session, and it was impossible for him to get me out on the *habeas corpus* writ. The day after I was jugged, the two girls who were boarding with Kitty and me at the house, came down to the jail to make me a call.

"It is a shame," they said, "for such a nice young fellow as you to get the collar on account of that bloke Mickey Cobey giving you away! If he and the girl Kitty had kept their mouths shut, and answered the Captain at the Station-House that they didn't know you, he wouldn't have held you. At any rate, we will never speak to Kitty again, nor Cobey either," the girls said.

One of the girls had a bottle of whisky under her bustle, which she took out on the quiet and slid into the cell. I thanked the girls for their kindness, and they promised to come down every day and make me a visit. Of course I knew what they were up to, but it seemed pleasant to have some friend to think about even when I suspected that they only wanted to queer Kitty, and then get me to put up for them when I got out. Christmas Day they gave me a pleasant little surprise. They came down in the afternoon and brought me a roasted chicken, a beefsteak, some cigars, a bottle of brandy, a goose, and a

pair of nicely stuffed ducks. Whether they tasted as well as they looked, I was never able to say, for while I was taking exercise tramping around the tier in the afternoon, some one went into my cell, and swiped everything except the goose. As my friend Fogarty, "Jersey Jimmy," and one or two others were waiting trial, I rather thought that they ate my dinner. However, as they kindly left me the goose, I had plenty to eat, and if they had spoken to me beforehand, I would have given as cheerfully and bounteously as they had taken.

Christmas and New Year's passed without anything happening worthy of mentioning. The first Monday of the year 1872 a new District-Attorney took his seat, and in the mean time the Knapp brothers had engaged Lawyer Ed Price to try and get me discharged. Billy gave him $50, and promised him an extra fifty if he got me out. About half-past 10 the first day the court opened, the tier-keeper yelled out to me to get ready for court. That meant that I was going to plead to my indictment, or be tried. As a general rule, the keeper goes around the night before and puts your name on a slate hanging over your door on the outside, to notify you beforehand to be ready, and avoid any delay when the officers come.

However, I was very soon ready, and being handcuffed to John Greenthal, a notorious crook and shoplifter, I left the Tombs in care of the sheriff, who told me that Lawyer Price was waiting down in the court-house

to see me. I was a little surprised that my case had been turned over to Price, because I knew he was a young lawyer and had not had much practice. But still greater was my surprise when, soon after I had entered the court-room, I heard the announcement that Price had won his case and I was free. It was the first case, if I remember rightly, that he had before this court, and I can recollect almost exactly the words he used as he addressed the Judge. After he had got through talking, I guess everybody in the court-room was very indignant that such an innocent and hardworking, respectable, honest, Christian citizen as I had been suffering in prison.

He said that it was a shame that his client should suffer a tedious imprisonment, confined and locked up in a stiffling, damp cell, for an offense of which I was as innocent as a child unborn; and also that I, an honest man, after working all night, should come home and find a drunken wife, who, in my absence, had turned my humble residence into a house of debauchery and shame. Then he drew a picture of my entering the room most sacred to a husband, to rest my weary limbs after my night's labors, and finding a stranger there.

"Why, gentlemen," he said, "just stop for a moment and think of this poor workingman, accused of robbing a person to whom he had been no nearer than fifty blocks! I beg of you, think of it. Why, I think, gentlemen, if I had been placed in the position that my client was placed in at that time, I

would not have been answerable or accountable for what I myself might have done. What did my client do? Did he knock the man down? No: he simply tells the man to take his coat and hat, and come with him to the nearest police station, and he would see him set right. Did the complainant do that? No, of course he did not; instead of that, after he had gained the sidewalk, the complainant asks my client to take him where he could get some more rum, for he hadn't had enough, and must have some more. My client takes him to a friend of his at the Warren Hotel, a thoroughly respectable place. What then takes place? Why, this complainant then commences to abuse the bartender because he happens to be a friend of my client, and is threatened by the barkeeper with ejection. Consequently he takes to his heels, appeals to the nearest police officer, and has my client arrested. And the police Judge commits him, it being Sunday and he being in a hurry—commits my client, gentlemen, without any further examination! And there he has languished in the Tombs prison since the middle of last month. And now I ask my learned District-Attorney to discharge this wronged and outraged man."

To my great joy the Judge ordered the handcuffs to be taken off me then and there, and, many thanks to Lawyer Price, I left the room free. But although I had just got out of this scrape, my mind at once turned towards business, and I asked Billy Knapp

what there was for me to do for him. Billy told me that the paper that was to have been laid down on the Monday following my arrest had turned out a bad job. He said that the party, Burke, whom I had sent him to, took it to the bank and had made a botch of it, and had got arrested and was then in the Tombs.

"Yes," I said, "I have spoken with him half a dozen times. He was on the tier of cells above me, and seems to feel well enough satisfied. He thinks that he might have gotten away if he had tried, and blames nobody but himself for his stupidity. He is very thankful to you and Fred for the $150 you sent in to him, and has told all the boys on the tier that he is a great bank-robber. He says he does not care if he gets sent up for two years, and that he will not open his mouth to any one."

Billy was very glad to hear this, and we went up to the saloon, where the rest of the gang all had a great laugh at me. I told them that they had better be careful, as laughing was catching, and I might have to laugh at some of them before a great while. Pretty soon I left the boys and went down to the scene of my old troubles in Elizabeth Street. I took up my quarters this time with Mary Woods, and everything was all right again. Of course I heard a great deal of talk one way and another, and some said to me that they believed it was all a put-up job by Harris. But I knew better, and a few days afterwards Detective Brennan and I happened to meet on

the street, and he asked me what was to be done about the two girls in the Tombs. He said the case would come up for trial within a day or two, and that they had no counsel employed. I told him I thought he took a great deal more interest in the case at the present time than I did, and that if he was so very anxious about them perhaps he would kindly employ counsel himself. That shut him up, and he walked away.

The next day came, and the District-Attorney sent one of his detectives up to the House of Detention for the complainant, Rogers. My father happened to be on duty at the time when the District-Attorney's order came in, and he went to the room that is set aside for witnesses, and told Rogers to get ready for court. As one of his boots hurt his foot when he tried to put it on, he asked my father for an old shoe, and had been given an old pair of carpet slippers that he had been wearing round the House of Detention. As he had no occasion to wear his boots, they had remained untouched under his bed ever since. On this day, when he went to put them on to go down to the District-Attorney's Office, he found that the same boot still hurt his foot. He picked it up and handed it to my father, telling him that there was a bunch up in the toe that hurt him so much that he could not wear it, and asked my father to take the boot away, and try and get the bunch out.

Father took the boot and went out into the office, and seizing the poker from the stove, drew out from

the toe of the boot what had been hurting the man's foot. To the astonishment of everybody, it proved to be a roll of bills amounting to $1,635. My father went in and said to Rogers:

"See here, now, how you have three or four innocent people locked up in the Tombs on a charge of robbing you, and by your own carelessness in getting drunk, and ramming your foot into your boot where you had hidden your money on going to bed, you have caused all this trouble. If I was the Judge I would give you six months on the Island for your carelessness."

The man was soon gotten ready, and in company with my father and the detective went down to the District-Attorney's office. When the story of the finding of the money in the boot was told, the District-Attorney of course dismissed all the complaints against the two women, and gave Rogers a reprimand and a piece of advice which he probably remembers to this day. The girls were soon let out of the Tombs, and immediately came up to the house. Kitty told me that she was very sorry for what she had done, and if she had only been sober it would never have happened. If I would only forgive her and make up, it would never happen again. I told her that I felt sorry for her, but not sorry enough to live with her again, after what had happened. I assured her, however, that I would never see her in want for anything; and I kept my word faithfully as long as I had my liberty.

CHAPTER VII.

ROBBING A BANK MESSENGER OF $3,000.

I WAS sitting around in Knapp's saloon one afternoon, shortly after my release from the Tombs, when Billy Bartlett strolled in. He had a little talk with the Knapp brothers, and in a few moments they called me up to the bar, and said that Bartlett had a paper on a jug over on Eighth Avenue. He could find nobody to lay it down for him, and as it was getting late in the afternoon, he wanted to know if I would take it to the bank and get it cashed for him. Billy Knapp, who took quite an interest in my welfare, and always had an eye open for himself, took me on one side and whispered to me that our gang would have a paper of our own the next day to lay down. He said of course I could suit myself about going, but he thought it was very funny that Billy Bartlett should come from across-town to get a man. However, I told him that I would go, and be extra careful.

Bartlett and I started out and I could see very soon that there was something wrong. I had the paper in my pocket, and when we arrived at the bank I walked straight up to the paying-teller's

window, and the cashier took it. He was gone rather longer than usual to compare the signature and get the money, and when he returned he gave me a very sharp look, and asked me if I knew the gentlemen personally on whom the check was drawn. I couldn't conscientiously say, Yes, I did, so I said the next best thing, that I did not, but that if he would give me the check I would take it to my employer, mentioning the man's name to whom it was made payable, and he could send up a man that they could identify. The cashier was not at all sure that the check was wrong, and I evidently took him suddenly by my offer to make things all right, so that he was completely off his guard, and handed me back the check. That was all I wanted, and I had it torn up and chewed into a thousand pieces before I reached the sidewalk. The banks at that time had been fleeced so much that they were beginning to be "dead leary" of checks unless everything was straight.

I met Billy Bartlett a couple of blocks down the avenue and told him what had happened. He acted like a crazy man, and said I had no right to destroy the check. I told him I had done exactly what I should do on any other occasion, to make sure that in case I had been followed and arrested, that they would not be able to find the check on my person. This, however, did not satisfy Bartlett, and he left me, declaring that I was afraid. I went back to the Mott Street saloon, and after telling Billy and Fred

of the whole transaction, was assured by them that I had done exactly right, and was advised to have nothing more to do with Bartlett or his checks.

The next day Billy Knapp and myself took a cab and went down-town to a large bank. I got out, went into the jug and got my check cashed, while Billy waited outside in the cab. When I returned with the money, Billy ordered the cab to drive straight to Delmonico's, where we had a small bottle of Piper Heidsieck. Billy gave me four one-hundred-dollar bills for my share of the boodle, and then we separated. I walked up to the house on Elizabeth Street, and after paying out about $25 or $30 to the Dutchman, and giving him a couple of hundred to keep for me, dropped in at the Mott Street dive, where I spent about twenty "bones" with the boys.

As I look back upon those days, it seems to me that I never enjoyed anything in my life more than giving a couple of dollars here and there to some poor fellow I knew was in need of it. I must say that I think I did a great deal of good with a portion of my money by paying rents for poor girls, and supplying them, now and then, with money for shoes, hats, and clothes. In many cases I saw to it that they expended the money for necessary articles because I was not fool enough to supply them with money for booze. I remember, in one case, of a woman who had seen better days, and who had a small child just beginning to walk and be cunning. I went out on the Bowery and bought it a very nice

little crib bedstead, and had it sent to the woman's house. It always made me feel good to help those poor people when I could afford it, and although I knew they were leading bad lives, I could not blame them, on account of their lack of education and wretched bringing up. If I were a millionaire to-day I would spend all my spare money among this class of people, because I know they are the very ones whom our great and philanthropic rich people consider unworthy. I myself believe that these women are a necessary evil of this great city, and our righteous-minded, charitable citizens are too hasty in passing judgment.

A few days after the success of our last venture, out of which I had realized $400, I was sent down-town to procure a check from some solid firm. I traveled around in the lower part of the business portion of the city, and finally decided on the firm that I would strike. I went into the store and bought $20 worth of goods, ordering them to be packed up and sent up-town to a certain address. I handed the gentlemanly clerk that waited on me, and who proved to be one of the firm, a $50 bill in payment for the goods, and asked him if he would oblige me with one of his checks for the balance of the money, as I wished to send just that amount to a friend by mail. He was perfectly willing to do so, because I had been an easy customer and probably paid twenty or twenty-five per cent. more than a shrewder business man would have given for the bill of goods.

He went away to the back office, but soon returned with the check and also took me out and blew me off a drink. We shook hands very cordially, and as he bid me good-bye he asked me to call again whenever I wanted any more goods. I promised him that I would not forget them, and would surely give them a call, but I knew that I had bought my last bill of goods from that firm. I took the check and hastened up-town with it. Billy Knapp pronounced it a first-class name, and at once sent it to the forger. Next day it came back from the pen-man, made out to the amount of three thousand dollars, and with it came the orders to take it to the bank on which it was drawn, and get the cashier to endorse it, and then meet Hargrave, the middle-man, at French's Hotel.

"What the devil does all this mean?" exclaimed both the Knapps. "Well, we will have to obey orders from the scratcher, at any rate."

Harris having shown up the day before, and saying that he had been out of town, agreed to take the check the next morning. When we told him that it was only to get the cashier's endorsement, he said he couldn't see the point, and backed out. As for that matter, none of us could tell what the forger wanted to do after the check was endorsed. However, I said I would take it to the cashier, but that I ought not to be expected, after doing that, to lay it down without getting an extra slice of the boodle. The gang agreed that, if I did the whole job, I

should get one hundred dollars more than the rest. I took the check and got it endorsed by the cashier without any trouble, and then the two Knapps, Harris, and myself went down to French's Hotel, where we met Phil Hargrave, who informed us that the forger had made up his mind to try his hand upon bonds, and wanted us to go down to a certain Wall Street firm and buy $4,000 worth of bonds. Hargrave had one thousand dollars in cash to put with the check, so as to make it look more solid and business-like; and what was more, he stated that he wanted me to buy the bonds, as there was more of a business look about me than any of the rest. The forger sent word that in case there was any trouble about the firm on Wall Street taking the check, after the cashier had endorsed it, that he had arranged with Phil Farley, one of New York's greatest detectives at that time, to be on hand near the firm's office, to arrest me and let me go again.

Well, after I understood my part of the business, and as it was then very nearly 1 o'clock, I went to the bar at French's Hotel and took a good stiff drink of brandy to nerve me up a little. I then strolled down past the *Tribune* Building, through Nassau Street, and asked for four $1,000 of bonds. The counting-room clerk went and got the bonds ready, and I handed him the raised check for $3,000, and the boodle. He looked at the check and then glanced up at me, and, taking the paper, went into the inner office to show it to some member of the

firm. In a few moments he returned and asked me if I knew any one on the street. He meant to inquire whether I was known by any responsible business firm. I gave him the name of the first banking-house that came into my head: it was the well-known firm of Jay Cook & Co. He put on his hat and went out, saying that he would return in a moment or two, and I supposed of course that he ran around to Jay Cook & Co., and found out that they didn't know me from a last year's chicken-coop.

Just as the forger had said, Detective Farley was near the building, and when the clerk returned he brought him in with him. Stepping behind the counter the clerk handed out the $1,000 in cash, and, passing the check to Detective Farley, said that that gentleman would accompany me to the bank, and if the cashier said it was all right, or was willing to cash it, I could come back and get my bonds. I tried to argue with him by telling him that I myself had taken the check to the cashier of the bank for his signature and knew that it was all right.

Oh, yes, he said, he didn't doubt that it was all right enough, but as he had failed to find anybody on the street who knew me or the firm on whom the check was drawn, he must take the usual precaution. Detective Farley then said to me:

"My man, you are wasting time, for if we don't hurry up to the bank it will be closed, and unless there is somebody to identify you in the vicinity of

the bank, you will have to sleep up at Police Headquarters to-night."

We then left, and Farley asked me as we walked towards William Street:

"Why in the devil, if you were in the bank and got that check endorsed, didn't you get it cashed at the same time?"

"The forger wanted us to do as we have done, and that is all I know about it," I told the detective.

By this time we had turned the corner of William Street and were out of sight, when we were met by the two Knapp brothers, who joined the detective. They all said that they couldn't understand why the check hadn't been cashed in the first place, for, certainly, if the cashier would endorse it he was willing to cash it. If George Engel, the forger, had wanted to use the bonds, he could have bought them just as well with the cash as he could with the check, and all this bother and exposure and loss of time would have been avoided.

"Maybe," said I, "if we can get to the bank before it closes, it won't be too late to get it cashed yet."

"Yes," said Farley, "but what will the cashier think?"

"Oh," said I, "I will fix that: I will tell him that I am Jay Cook & Co.'s messenger, and that we don't know this firm on whom the check is drawn, and would greatly prefer the cash."

"That is a great scheme," said all hands; and looking at our watches, we found it was just twenty-

five minutes of 3 o'clock and as there was a cab standing on the corner, Detective Farley and I jumped into it and hastened to the bank, while the rest followed as fast as they could. We told the driver to whip up his horse, and promised him an extra dollar if he dropped us at the bank before it closed. We got out at the corner below the bank, ran in, and I presented the check just as they were putting away the cash in the vaults. The paying-teller picked up the paper, and was about to pass out the money through the little window, when the cashier came up behind him, and asked who it was drawing so late. The teller shoved the check along to the cashier, and he noticed his own signature on the back of it.

"Why," said he, "I endorsed this check myself early this morning! What do you want it cashed for?" he asked, turning to me.

"I am a messenger from Jay Cook & Co.," said I.

"What! they doubt my signature, do they?" asked the cashier, in an angry tone.

"Oh, no, not that," I replied, "but they don't know the firm the check is drawn on."

"I see," he said, picking up the check and looking at it. "It strikes me that the amount is a little larger than usual, but the signature is all right."

The cashier then turned to a young man inside the bank, who was just putting on his coat to go home, and said:

"Here, James, just you take this money, this

$3,000, and go over to Jones & Co. with this gentleman here and see if the amount of this check is all right. Mr. Cook's messenger will go with you."

Out of the bank we went together and crossed the street, and I could see Detective Farley and the Knapps and English Jim looking at us in astonishment from the opposite corner. I gave them the signal to follow along, as I had no intention of going near the firm, but didn't quite know what to do to give the bank messenger the wrong lay. After I had walked about a block, I asked him if he would take a drink. But no, he didn't drink. Then I asked him if he would have a smoke, but no such luck, for he never used tobacco either. I then said to him that I had a bad pain in my stomach, and must go in for a moment at the next corner liquor store and get a drink of brandy and ginger ale. In the meantime I had been talking bank business with him, and I felt sure that he had no suspicion that I was not a messenger from Jay Cook & Co.

On reaching the next corner, we both went into the saloon, and while I was getting my drink, the rest of the gang, who had been following on the opposite side of the street, strolled in and took seats at some tables. I finished my drink, and then excused myself to this kind and obliging young man, by telling him that I must go to the closet for a moment, and would return shortly. I spoke loud enough so that all could hear me, and by the time I had reached the passageway, Billy Knapp and Harris were in the

room ahead of me. I told them as rapidly as possible the whole trouble, and that we were on our way to the firm that had drawn the check to make sure that the paper was all right. I stated that the young man outside had the $3,000 in his pocket.

"Where has he got the boodle?" asked Harris.

"In his right inside pocket," I said.

"That will do," said Billy Knapp. "Here, Sam, you go out in the yard there, and I will throw you over the fence, and you can reach the next block out through the adjoining house. Harris, you go into the bar-room and tell Fred to come in here, and when you see the young fellow start to come in, as he will certainly do, shortly, to look for Sam, you come close up behind him, as if you were going to push by him. Then you yell out to Fred and me to hurry up, and I will swipe that money without any trouble or raising any suspicion that the young fellow has lost it. He has got his coat open, like a blank fool."

CHAPTER VIII.

VERY CLEVERLY ROBBED BY A PICKPOCKET.

It is needless to say that as soon as I got over the fence, I made myself scarce, and hurried through the next street up to Delancy Street, where I happened to know a girl who lived there. I ran up into her rooms, not knowing at the time that she had a husband. But it seems that she had, and that that same husband was one of New York's greatest professional crooks, and, worse than all this, he happened to be at home, for he came out of the bedroom, pretty well filled with whisky for a crook, just as I entered. He ordered me out with no gentle language, but the girl, who knew me well, said:

"Don't get mad, Larry; this is Sam, who works with the Knapp gang, and he has had a chase."

"Well, let him chase out of here, then," was Larry's inconsiderate reply; and all that I could do, or this young lady could say, made no difference with Larry, and out of the house I hurried, and such was the speed with which I made my escape that I lost my hat.

I ran down the block, where I saw the sign of a liquor store called "The Little Brown Jug," and

knowing that it was a crook's hanging-out-place, I ran in and found the proprietor a very obliging man. He sized me up at once as being in some kind of trouble, and sliding the bolt of a panel door let me into a back room, where half-a-dozen crooks were playing faro. As soon as I got my breath and calmed down a little, I came out into the bar-room, and had something to drink; then I got some writing-paper off him, and sent a note round to the Knapps' saloon, telling the boys where I was hiding. After I had sent the note, the proprietor, who had taken the pains to read the directions on the envelope, said that he knew the parties my note was addressed to, and I need not be afraid to tell him what I wanted. I knew that he was acquainted with the business the gang was in, and we fell to discussing various matters until the messenger returned, in about an hour, bringing with him a hat and a fifty-dollar bill enclosed in an envelope. There was also a note for me from Billy Knapp, saying that Harris had "swiped" the $3,000 out of the bank clerk's pocket all right, and advising me to keep away from my house for a while, and go over to Thompson Street to a house kept by a woman named Mother Gasby. Billy added that Mother Gasby was a friend of his, and would take care of me all right, and that one of the gang would be over there to see me the next day.

I settled up with the "Little Brown Jug," and when it was dark, took a round-about course across-town to Thompson Street, where I found the house

designated. It seemed that Mother Gasby was an old woman who kept a small cigar store in the front apartment as a sort of a "bluff" to the police, and that in her back room she had a hiding-place for crooks. I told her who I was, and that Billy Knapp had sent me to stay over night. She was glad to see me, and invited me into her back parlor, where I found a very cheerful open-grate fire and cosy, home-like room. She said that no one occupied the room except Lizzie, who was a friend of the Knapps. At the sound of her voice, Miss Lizzie came out of a little bedroom, and I was introduced to her. She proved to be a wayward daughter of a friend of mine who kept a saloon a few blocks away. I sent out the "growler" for some beer, and after a few drinks Lizzie left.

As we were finishing up the beer in came a couple of pickpockets, known to the police as James Rogers alias "Jimmy Johnson," and "Big-Mouthed Scotty." Scotty showed a big "leather," or pocket-book, with about $40 in it.

"Look here, 'Mouthy'" said Rogers, "you can't fool me with any $40; I saw at least $100 in it before you 'knucked' it off the old gentleman."

"I haven't looked at it since I 'pinched' it," replied Scotty.

"I know a blank sight better," said Rogers; "you have been through it, and 'weeded' it since you 'pinched' it. Now, fork over!"

Instead of replying on the defensive any further,

"Big-Mouthed Scotty" demanded that Rogers produce the watch that he had secured in his turn. Rogers slowly drew from his pocket an ancient silver watch, and then it was Scotty's turn to make a kick.

"You can't work that white thing off on me," said Scotty; "when you pinched that clock it was red!"

"I know better," said Rogers; "this was the watch I swiped, and it has not turned from gold to silver in my pocket—not likely."

After a long argument, it was finally settled between them and a divy was made, after which Scotty left. Jim Rogers remained, and informed Mother Gasby that he would have to put up with her for that night, as he didn't care to be seen around his old stamping-grounds. Mother Gasby said that her house was all full except the room I was going to occupy, and she asked me if I had any objection to sharing the bed with Jim. I wasn't in a position to be very particular, so I said that I should be pleased to have Rogers remain for the night.

Well, we occupied the same room that night, and some time during the small hours of the morning Mr. Rogers arose, without taking the pains to wake me, and cleaned me out of everything I had with the exception of my shoes and stockings and underclothes. Rogers left the house by the store door, and as no one slept on the first floor but ourselves, of course all he had to do was to pick up my things and walk off. About 8 o'clock in the morning old

Mother Gasby knocked at my door, and I called to her to come in. The first words she said was:

"Where is Jim Rogers?"

"I don't know," I replied, rubbing my eyes.

"Well, he has gone out and left the store door unlocked!"

That gave me an idea, and glancing round the room, we both of us at the same moment saw that the notorious knuck had done me dirt. Mother Gasby sat down on the edge of a chair and looked at my shoes and bemoaned my luck. I told her she would have to go out and get me some clothes, or I would have to stay with her indefinitely. In an hour or so she came to my room again with a cheap pair of trousers and a blue-checked jumper that she had bought, around the corner, of a Baxter Street sheeny. I then got up and dressed myself, and found that the old lady had made me a cup of coffee and had a couple of hot rolls for my breakfast.

While I was smoking a cigar, I picked up the morning *World* to pass away the time, and almost the first thing I noticed was a detailed account of my presenting the check to be endorsed at a cross-town bank on the morning before. Afterwards, the story said, the same man had returned to the bank late in the afternoon to get it cashed, and the paying-teller was about to hand out the money, when the cashier became suspicious, and wanted to know who was drawing money so late in the day. Upon examining the check he had some doubts as to its

genuineness, and had called one of his trusty clerks, and had sent him with the money, together with the man presenting the check, to the firm it was drawn upon. On the way to the business house it appeared that the stranger had managed to decoy the bank clerk into a corner liquor store, where he was robbed of $3,000.

The next thing that caught my eye, in glancing over the paper, was that a man had been robbed in getting into a car at Canal and Sullivan streets. He complained to the police that he had lost $145, and another man made complaint that he had been robbed of a valuable gold watch. I then knew that these parties were the victims of Jim Rogers and "Big Mouthed Scotty," and that each of them had cheated the other in dividing up the swag.

During the afternoon Fred Knapp called to see me, and brought with him an old suit of clothes from my rooms on Elizabeth Street. Fred gave me $350 as my bit of the last transaction, and described to me in detail how cleverly Harris had taken the money from the bank clerk's pocket. He advised me to "wring myself," or keep away from my old haunts for a couple of weeks. I went to a barber and had my beard shaved and hair cut, and in the evening went over to Elizabeth Street and knocked at the door of Miss Wood's room. In a changed tone of voice I inquired if Sam was at home, and she replied that he had gone into the country because some of his family were sick. I then burst out laugh-

ing, and she told me that no one would tell her where I had gone, and she refused to give up my old suit of clothes until she had run around and seen Billy Knapp. I paid the Dutchman a few weeks' rent in advance, gave the girl some money, and then dropped into the Mott Street saloon, where the boys all had a laugh about Rogers going through me the night before.

I kept very quiet, and remained in-doors for a few days, and was very much interested reading what the reporters said in the daily papers about the check-raising business. About ten days afterwards Billy Knapp sent word to me one afternoon that he had got another paper on John Green. This was the man I got my first check cashed on, and it seems that still another check had been raised on him about two weeks before I joined the gang. In view of all the circumstances, Billy was afraid that somebody might take a tumble this time, and he advised me to try and find some chump that night, and try and post him up a little, so that he would be ready to lay down the paper next morning. It then being about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, I told Billy to wait until morning and I would go over to an intelligence office on Eighth Street and get a man.

Next day I paid the fee at this office, informing the clerk what kind of a man I wanted, upon which he called up a young Englishman, who claimed to be a book-keeper out of employment. I told the fellow that all I wanted was a man to sit in my office

and go to the bank, make deposits, and draw money. He assured me that he could do all that, and then I demanded, with great care, to see his recommendations. Finally I told him I thought he would suit, and I brought him down-town to a saloon on Grand Street, where I had met the gang for the first time. I left him sitting at a table for a few moments while I went out and saw the Knapps, who, with Harris, were waiting for me in their saloon. I told them that I had a man, and they all came around to see him, with the exception of Billy Knapp, who waited outside for a few moments, and then hurried in, exclaiming, in a loud tone of voice:

"Hallo, Sam, I was just up to the hotel and couldn't find you. I want to use $500 for a day or two, and happened to think of you as my nearest neighbor that would be likely to have that amount of ready cash."

"Oh, all right," I replied. "You shall have it, but you will have to wait a few moments until I can send to the bank and get a check cashed. Come along with me up to the Occidental Hotel, and I will send my man to the bank."

We all started out of the saloon together, and just as we got around the corner of Grand Street on the Bowery, and had passed by a couple of banks, I stopped, and calling up the supposed chump I said to him:

"Here, you take this check for $1,900, and go into that bank there and get it cashed. Then come up

to that hotel on the corner. You will find me in the sitting-room waiting for you; hurry up!"

Well, that supposed chump took the check, and we watched him go into the bank. Of course, we had no intention of going to that hotel unless we saw him come out and walk up toward it without any policeman or detective following him. Then one of us would manage to go round the corner of the hotel and wait for him before he got into the sitting-room.

But, my readers, there was no occasion for waiting for him.

I was standing across the street with Billy Knapp, while Harris was below the bank, and Fred took up a position near the hotel. In about five minutes out came the supposed chump on the run, and jumped on a Third Avenue car that was passing down-town. I saw him, and so did Harris and Billy, but as the cars are on only half a minute headway, we thought there was no need of running and catching a car. So we walked up rapidly, keeping within calling distance of the car, and watching that he didn't get off. It was not until it was near Canal Street that Harris jumped on the car, and Billy and I followed.

But, oh Heavens! he had skipped. He was invisible. Great was our surprise; and had it not been that we all had seen him take this car, we might have supposed that our eyes had deceived us. But we had all seen him, and, of course, we could not all have been mistaken. We got off the car very soon,

and went around to the saloon like three whipped men, with no remarks to make, and only to wait and find out whether there was anything at the bank that made him run.

Well, we didn't have long to wait, for on the front page of that same evening's *News* was this heading:

A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

"*A well-to-do cattle dealer goes to one of the up-town banks to draw some money, and he is informed by the cashier that he has just paid out a check drawn on him not twenty minutes before for $1,950.*"

"Why," said Mr. Green, "that must be a mistake! I have never written a check for such an amount, to my certain knowledge."

Then the cashier showed Mr. Green the check, and the drover said that it certainly was his handwriting, but that he had never given that amount to anybody. Upon looking over Mr. Green's account it was discovered that two more large checks had been paid recently, and that Mr. Green knew nothing about them. Mr. Green kept an account at the bank, and also carried a memorandum of every check he had made out. But if the bank was surprised to think that they had given out so much money carelessly, imagine how much more we were surprised to think that they had given this chump $1,950, and we had been beaten at our own game. Taking it all round, I think that we were most

to be prized. It is useless to say that we never heard from this man afterwards; and it may be that he took this money and went into some legitimate business, and that to-day he is independently rich. If so, and he should read this, perhaps he might feel it in his heart to come and condole with me and my misfortunes.

CHAPTER IX.

CAPTURED AT LAST, AND RAILROADED TO SING SING.

AFTER the trouble we had with the check that I had tried to buy the bonds with, and the exposure of the trick that had been played on Mr. Green, we concluded that it was getting too hot to continue in this line of business. After thinking the matter all over, we decided to try and work the savings-banks.

In order to do this it was necessary that we should have an office or place of business of some kind on Wall Street, or some other well-known business thoroughfare. So, after we had held a meeting, it was decided that I was to be head of the firm, and without any more delay I went down to Wall Street, and after looking through several office buildings, secured desk room at No. 114 Wall Street, up one flight of stairs. The gentleman who occupied the front room on this floor was a broker, and had more space than he needed for himself, and he had railed in two or three small spaces large enough for a desk and a couple of chairs. One of these I hired, and paid down in advance $25 for a month's rent.

Of course, the first thing to do was to give a busi-

ness aspect to the office, and I must certainly have an office-boy. On my way up-town I dropped into the *World* office, and inserted an advertisement for a small boy. I also ordered two tins signs with the following name and business nicely printed in gilt letters:

SAMUEL BARR & CO.,

REAL ESTATE & GENERAL COMMISSION BROKERS.

I also stepped in at a store on the Bowery, and ordered 500 business cards printed, and then reported my progress and expenditure of money to the gang. Next morning I went down to my office at 9 o'clock, and found about 500 boys waiting for me. Well, I soon picked out a bright lad that could read and write, and knew the city pretty well, and agreeing to pay him $6 a week, told him that it was to be his duty to be on hand mornings at 8 o'clock, and remain until after 4 in the afternoon. He was to receive the mail or any messages that might come for me in my absence, and if I was not there every day, to bring the mail up to the saloon at Mott Street. I then sent him up for the tin signs and the business cards that I had ordered the day before, and then sat down in a business sort of a way to smoke a cigar and read the newspapers.

It finally occurred to me that perhaps a pen or two, with some ink and paper, together with other office paraphernalia, would look more business-like.

I put on my hat and stepped round to Nassau Street, where I bought a couple of dollars' worth of paper and envelopes, &c., making such a sizable bundle that I had it sent down to the office. By the time I returned my boy had gotten back with the signs and cards, and I tacked one of the former on the directory down by the door, and put the other up over my desk. Having attended to all the business that required my personal supervision for that day, I put about fifty of my business cards in my pocket, and went up to the saloon, telling the boy that I might not return again that afternoon.

Next day I went down to the office, sat at my desk, did some writing, sent the boy out to post my letters, read the papers, and finally a friend dropped in to see me. Then I told my boy that I was called out of town on particular business for a few days. I went over to Jersey City and mailed to my office half a dozen blank envelopes with blank sheets of paper in them, and also sent a man over to Brooklyn to do the same, so that mail would begin to arrive at the office, and if the savings-bank people sent down to make any inquiry, they would find out that the firm of "Samuel Barr & Co." were presumably doing business.

In a couple of days Billy Knapp and I went up to four or five different savings-banks, and I opened an account with each of them by depositing all the way from $500 to $1,000, and leaving in each place my signature and a business card. The next day I did

the same thing at two or three more banks, and then I did nothing for a few days. On Saturday, the boy came up to the saloon, as I had not been down to the office, and I paid the youth his $6 for his week's work. On the following Monday we drew nearly all of our money out of the banks and deposited drafts. The next day we deposited money again, and drew on the drafts, and so on, until finally we had nothing but the drafts in the banks, and then we drew on them to almost the last cent. Thus we established ourselves as a reputable business firm, and the banks knew us.

In the latter part of February I went down-town one afternoon to get a check, as I had been told that everything was all right, and I went into the wholesale house of William Eggert, now Eggert & Wolf, dealers in leaf-tobacco. I asked if the firm dealt in cigars, or could direct me to a cigar firm, and Mr. Eggert told me that he happened to have some on hand that he thought might suit me. He showed me a few as samples, and I gave him a $50 note. I asked him if he could oblige me with his check for $30, and he said, "Certainly," and started to make out a check, when Mr. Wolf, who is now his partner, but was then, I believe, his book-keeper, came up to him with the $50 note in his hand and said something in a low tone of voice. Mr. Eggert replied, "Yes, certainly," and the book-keeper went out, as I thought, to see if the bill was good. In the meantime Mr. Eggert gave me a couple of very fine

cigars, which he made for me while I was looking at him. By the time I was through telling him that he was an expert cigar-maker, the book-keeper returned with the bill in his hand and said all right to Mr. Eggert, who gave me the check and cigars.

Going out upon the street again I fell in with Harris, who had been on the watch, and he at once asked me what the man came out for.

"You ought to know," I said; "you were out here. Where did he go?"

"Oh, he ran up the street, turned the corner, and I paid no more attention to him until he came back on a run and went into the store. I was just thinking of going into the store to see if they were holding you for the police or anything."

"Oh, thank you," I said, and then we went into a saloon further up the street, and I showed him the check. On account of its being perforated where the numbers and the signature are written, he said it was no good and could not be raised. I laughed, and told him that didn't make any difference, and we went up-town to the saloon. Billy took the check and gave it to Hargrave, who was there waiting for it, and away it went to the forger.

The next morning Harris was to be on hand to go to the bank with the check, but he didn't show up until the last moment, and then he claimed that he had such a "head" on him that he was afraid of drawing attention at the bank. But we soon gave him to understand that unless he took the paper he

ing, and she told me that no one would tell her where I had gone, and she refused to give up my old suit of clothes until she had run around and seen Billy Knapp. I paid the Dutchman a few weeks' rent in advance, gave the girl some money, and then dropped into the Mott Street saloon, where the boys all had a laugh about Rogers going through me the night before.

I kept very quiet, and remained in-doors for a few days, and was very much interested reading what the reporters said in the daily papers about the check-raising business. About ten days afterwards Billy Knapp sent word to me one afternoon that he had got another paper on John Green. This was the man I got my first check cashed on, and it seems that still another check had been raised on him about two weeks before I joined the gang. In view of all the circumstances, Billy was afraid that somebody might take a tumble this time, and he advised me to try and find some chump that night, and try and post him up a little, so that he would be ready to lay down the paper next morning. It then being about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, I told Billy to wait until morning and I would go over to an intelligence office on Eighth Street and get a man.

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and go to the bank, make deposits, and draw money. He assured me that he could do all that, and then I demanded, with great care, to see his recommendations. Finally I told him I thought he would suit, and I brought him down-town to a saloon on Grand Street, where I had met the gang for the first time. I left him sitting at a table for a few moments while I went out and saw the Knapps, who, with Harris, were waiting for me in their saloon. I told them that I had a man, and they all came around to see him, with the exception of Billy Knapp, who waited outside for a few moments, and then hurried in, exclaiming, in a loud tone of voice:

"Hallo, Sam, I was just up to the hotel and couldn't find you. I want to use $500 for a day or two, and happened to think of you as my nearest neighbor that would be likely to have that amount of ready cash."

"Oh, all right," I replied. "You shall have it, but you will have to wait a few moments until I can send to the bank and get a check cashed. Come along with me up to the Occidental Hotel, and I will send my man to the bank."

We all started out of the saloon together, and just as we got around the corner of Grand Street on the Bowery, and had passed by a couple of banks, I stopped, and calling up the supposed chump I said to him:

"Here, you take this check for $1,900, and go into that bank there and get it cashed. Then come up

until his clerks could get out into the front office and hold me. Then came a police officer, who, in a careless sort of a way, made a bluff at kissing the Bible, and told about how he had hustled me around to the Station-House, and then up to Police Headquarters, had searched me, but had found nothing suspicious on my person.

The Judge ordered an officer to take me downstairs, and shut me up in a cell. I had been there about half an hour, when two detectives called, and wanted to see the prisoner, because they could put a half-dozen charges against him. But the Captain told them that he would attend to the case, and the Judge said :

"Smith, I shall commit you to await the action of the grand jury."

I was then taken to the Tombs prison, and locked up in the second tier of cells. During the afternoon Detective Phil Farley came in to see me, and told me to keep quiet and say nothing to anybody about my case, and he would try and get me sent to the Island for a short sentence only. After I got up there, he said, if I had any brains I could be back in New York when the boat returned. That same afternoon I was brought out to be identified by several people, some of whom I was surprised to hear say that they recognized me, although I knew perfectly well that they had never seen me before in their lives. However, I was hurried out the third day to the Court of General Sessions before Recorder

Hackett, and I was allowed to plead guilty in the third degree. Recorder Hackett then said, in passing sentence upon me, that as it was my first offense, and as he believed I was only a tool in the hands of expert professionals, he would give me only two years in Sing Sing.

That afternoon, which I remember was the last day of February, 1872, and the Sheriff, being anxious to get paid the month's fee for transporting prisoners to Sing Sing, took me up with a crowd of others to the big gray prison on the Hudson. I remember the trip as well as though it was yesterday. Billy Shields was then the Under-Sheriff, and he, with two other deputies, came up with ten of us. It being a little late in the afternoon, instead of letting us take a lunch at Nelson's Hotel at Sing Sing Depot before taking us down to the prison, Billy went in and bought a bottle of whisky, and we drank it on our way from the station to the prison. It was customary to take prisoners to the hotel in those days, and give them a lunch or some kind of refreshment before they began their term. As it was late we were put in our cells that night with our own clothes on, and the next morning went to the prison tailor's shop, where we were bathed, and exchanged our own clothes for the prison uniforms. Then we were shaved up clean and taken to the hospital, where our descriptive lists were made out.

I had been in my cell but a short time when a certain keeper, whose name I don't think it fair to men-

tion, came to me and said that a friend of mine in the city had sent word up to him about me, and that he would look out for my welfare. I told him that one of the prisoners, a friend of mine, was working in the cook-house, and had advised me to try and get in there to work.

"Oh, you would not like it in there," he said; "the work at times is pretty hard."

I told him I was willing to try and do all the hard work there was to be done. He went away, but soon returned, and unlocking my cell, took me over to the kitchen, where he made me acquainted with Matt Benson, then the kitchen-keeper. He said to Benson that I was all right, and that if the work became too hard for me, to let him know, and he would change me. I worked in the cook-house for about five months, when a friend of mine, who had just come up from New York, was put to work on Albert Walker's contract machine for turning out blocks of granite. I was also given a job tending a part of the machine, and stood on the revolving table, shoveling the mixture into the sockets as they came round in front of me. The machine turned out eight blocks a minute, weighing from twenty-five to thirty pounds each, so it is easy to be seen that I had to keep that shovel moving; and it was no "soft snap" of a job. The machine was not complete in those days, and never ran over twenty or thirty minutes consecutively, but once. On that occasion I ran it over an hour.

I remember that long hour very distinctly, because there was a large delegation of Wall Street speculators up there that afternoon, looking at it before they bought stock.

Among the crowd of financiers were two buckle-shop proprietors—a Mr. Hayden and his partner. While they were looking at the machine, two convicts, one of whom was no less than my friend "Yaller" Davis, who had escaped before, and been brought back again, contrived to disguise their faces so that they very much resembled Mr. Hayden and his partner—Mr. Tompkins, I think, was his name. They always came to the prison in an old doctor's carriage, with a very spirited horse, which was hitched under a shed at the back of the shop. While all hands were intently watching the machine, these two convicts untied the horse, jumped into the carriage, and drove out of the yard. They passed right out through the prison, by the prison-office, and up along the hill; passed the guard, and the guard bowed pleasantly to the two contractors, as he thought, and received a pleasant salutation in return.

They were all right so far; but as they passed the post-office in the village, bowing to people here and there, Mr. Tompkins's hostler happened to be standing in the doorway. He said:

"Well, I swear! what's struck my boss? He never bows to anybody."

Just then they struck the horse with the whip, and

then the man knew for a certainty that it was not his boss; and, running to his stable, he took a three-year-old colt out of the stall, leaped on its back, and gave chase. The convicts, hearing some one after them, stopped the carriage and took to the fields, where they were caught in a barn, and returned to prison again.

I had no troubles or disputes with any of the prison officials while I was serving my term; and, therefore, received my regular commutation on the sentence; and after finishing my term, I returned to New York, and made a vow that I would never renew my criminal career. I determined that I had seen the last of State's prison, and henceforth would lead an honest life. It was not an easy thing to avoid my old friends, and when I undertook to find employment, I discovered that the stigma of the penitentiary was upon me. I sought employment of all kinds; but wherever I went I was met with a cold rebuff as soon as it was known that I had been an inmate of a penal institution.

CHAPTER X.

HOW MR. E. B. HARPER SAVED ME FROM HOPELESS DESPAIR.

No person who has not served a term in a prison can know how hard it is for an ex-convict to get work of any kind. The brand of the courts and of the penitentiary are upon him for life, and wherever he turns, people push him from them with suspicion and insult. There is no place in the wide world open to him, and it is indeed a strong man who is not again driven to crime through starvation, and the need of a kind and helping hand.

I was very nearly desperate after a few weeks of freedom from my imprisonment. I owed for my board, and my rent was overdue. I had been to scores of wealthy men, who are reported to be New York's most charitable citizens, and I had asked for employment at anything they could give me. Everywhere I went I was turned away quickly, and many refused even to listen to what I had to say. What was I to do? and where should I seek next? In this extremity several of my old associates had approached me with offers to take me into their schemes, and I knew that if I should return to my life of crime, I could

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live at ease—at least until the police should again catch me.

I was, as I said, on the verge of desperation, when, one morning, I picked up a newspaper, and read a large advertisement of E. B. Harper & Co., Insurance Agents, then located at No. 212 Broadway. I had heard of the firm before, as one of the largest insurance establishments in the city, but I feared that Mr. Harper would probably treat me just as the other rich and busy men had that I had seen. I walked down to the building, and was mechanically repeating the name of the firm, as it was printed on the directory near the door, when two young men came down the stairs. One of them said :

"A fine man, that Mr. Harper."

"Yes" replied the other. "He is a very square man to deal with. His inducements are big, and he ought to do a good business."

I did not hesitate any longer. Somehow, from that moment I had a sort of feeling that if I could only get to Mr. Harper personally, as those two young men had, he would befriend me. I hurried up-stairs to the office, and on entering I saw a stylishly dressed young man, whom I took to be one of the firm. I went over to the desk where he was sitting, and said that I had come in answer to an advertisement I had seen in a paper for agents. He asked me if I had ever been in the Insurance business, and I told him I had not. Then I honestly told him my whole story, and said that I was an ex-

convict, but was making the endeavor of my life to abandon crime and earn an honest living. But the only answer I received was a snub, and the remark that it was not a very easy thing for a thief to be honest in this world.

I was just rising from the chair, my last hope dashed to the ground, and the tears coming to my eyes, when Mr. Harper himself stepped briskly out of his private office, and came up to the clerk's desk with a document in his hand. He was very busy, but happening to glance at me, and, I suppose, noticing my ill concealed despair, said quickly:

"What is the trouble, my man?"

"I have been trying to get employment as an agent."

"Well—?" said Mr. Harper, in a kind tone of voice.

"But I am an ex-convict, and this gentleman says he cannot employ me."

"Oh, pshaw! I am Mr. Harper. It is at least to your credit that you have admitted honestly that you have been in prison. Come into my room here and let me hear your story."

Mr. Harper led the way into a handsomely furnished private office, and taking a seat in a comfortable chair in front of his great desk, told me to sit down. He then asked me to tell him just how I got into trouble, and I told him, briefly, the story of my miserable dishonesty.

And do you think Mr. Harper ordered me out, and

made any slurring remarks about having no time to waste with convicts, as many other wealthy and charitable business men had done so often? Did he think any the less of me for telling him the truth and answering frankly every question he asked? No indeed. Mr. Harper listened to every word I said, only now and then shaking his head in a sad sort of a way. When I had told him everything, he thought a moment or two, and then turning to me took my hand, and said:

"My man, I feel very much encouraged by the fact that you have made no attempt to secretly obtain employment, and have not tried to conceal anything from me. You have led a misguided life, but you have suffered a great deal of punishment already. It is not right that your early career should follow you all your life, and if you honestly desire to reform, you ought to have an opportunity. I do not myself think it would be fair to you nor to your employers to place you in a position of financial trust, where you would be in temptation. But I am willing to provide employment for you where you can do honest, faithful work, and be removed from temptation."

I was so overjoyed to at least find a friend who would help me, that I could scarcely keep the tears back. While I was trying to thank Mr. Harper, he said:

"Now, I am aware that I may be imposed upon, but I want to say to you that I am going to take

you at your word and believe that you are a reformed man. If I am deceived the injury to your life will be much greater to you than it can be to me. But you must be sober, honest, and industrious. If you keep these three things in mind, I have little fear of your returning to your old life. Now, my man, go outside and one of my clerks will give you some instructions, and I have no doubt you will make a faithful employee."

Saying this, Mr. Harper touched a bell on his desk, and directed a clerk to look after me. As I went out he shook my hand, and smiled kindly, and I felt that if ever a man in the world was made to do good and was following his mission, that man was Mr. E. B. Harper.

I was treated in a very different manner than when I first entered by the other employees of the big insurance firm, and was soon supplied with the necessary papers to enable me to do my work as an employee of the company. I worked hard and faithfully, and Mr. Harper inquired frequently to know how I was doing. I was proud to feel that the reports were in no way discreditable. This was about twelve years ago.

Mr. Harper is now President of the Mutual Reserve Fund Life Insurance Company, which occupies three or four floors of the Potter Building on Park Row. He has built it up so that now it is one of the largest life insurance companies in the world. He has hundreds of thousands of people who are

insured with him in all parts of the country, and the older the company grows the bigger it gets. I don't know whether it is all due to Mr. Harper, but I can say from sad experience, that he is one out of a thousand—a man who found time in the midst of all his business to stop and say an encouraging word to a hopeless man, and give him employment when others, with loud pretensions of their charity, turned him away. I only regret that after many months in his employ sickness forced me to leave my work, and I was not wise enough to return to it.

CHAPTER XI.

MY HASTY MARRIAGE.

WHEN I was compelled, against my will, through sickness to leave the employ of Mr. Harper, I went to board at the home of a widow, a Mrs. McComb, who kept a large furnished-room house on Forsyth Street. I had been stopping there at odd times for four or five years, and knew the family very well. Mrs. McComb had two boys, who were worthless young men, and preferred to live on the hard earnings of their mother than do any work for themselves. I took somewhat of a fancy to one of the boys, George, and used to take him with me for company when I went out. Just about this time the idea had struck me that, perhaps, I could make a fair living peddling about the streets with a horse and wagon. I tried to raise enough money to procure a team, and, while out one day, suggested to George that he should work with me when I got started.

One Saturday afternoon, in the month of September, while we were standing on the corner of Broadway and Twenty-seventh Street, I remarked to George that I would have to go home then, for I

had an appointment for the evening. He said that it was early in the evening, and seemed surprised at my hurry. I told him that I had promised to take a young woman, named Mamie Lynch, whom George had introduced me to, to the theatre that evening. He immediately grew angry, and said:

"Why, Mamie Lynch is a decent girl!"

"Well," I replied, "if I didn't suppose that she was a respectable girl, she could not walk across the street with me; for I have a father and sisters, and I have some respect left for myself yet. And, by the way, young man, if you have such a high regard for the girl, it is about time that you stopped taking her round to that dance-house on Allen Street."

"I never take her there!" said George.

"I heard you tell her last night," I replied, "that you would meet her and take her there this evening; and it was for that very reason, to prevent her from being decoyed to this dive, that I had made up my mind to see her first and take her to the theatre."

George was so angry at what I said to him that he struck me a sudden blow, and then started through Twenty-seventh Street to Fourth Avenue. I was surprised at his behavior, and walked to the house on Forsyth Street, where I was told by his mother that he had been home a few moments before and left in a terrible temper, declaring that he would kill me. Paying little attention to his threats, I dressed myself for the evening and was waiting in the house, when Mrs. McComb said that there was

a young lady around on the corner of Allen and Stanton streets, who was waiting to see me.

I hurried to the place designated and met Mamie Lynch, who was very heavily veiled. I noticed at once that she had been crying, and seemed very nervous. I told her that we were altogether too early for the theatre, and then asked her what the trouble was. She then said that she had had trouble at home, and that her father and mother, after severely scolding her, had driven her out of the house. I tried to tell her that she had better go home and smooth matters over, but she persisted in declaring that she would never enter her parents' house again. She was very determined, and said that she thought George would take care of her and see she didn't suffer.

As I had for some time contemplated finding a wife, it suddenly struck me that here was an opportunity to marry a friendless girl and settle down to a happy home. I had often thought that there is nothing better for a man than to have a good, consoling wife that he can go home to after his day's work. On the impulse of the moment, I said to her:

"Mamie, suppose you and I go and get married."

"No!" she said; "not the kind of marriage you mean."

"Well," I said; "there is only one kind of marriage that I have in view, and that is for us to go to a minister of the Church, and be made man and wife."

"Oh!" she said very reluctantly, and in another

moment I had determined upon one of the greatest mistakes of my life. I had ample cause before long to curse the hour that she and I had the misfortune to become acquainted with each other. I talked with her a little while, and then we determined to seek a minister at once and be married. We went to a young clergyman who lived in a brown stone house on Seventeenth Street, near Second Avenue, and Mamie and myself were ushered into a beautifully furnished parlor. The minister looked us over, and said that as Miss Lynch scarcely looked of legal age to be married, I had better go and get some witnesses, and that while I was in search of them, he would take my intended bride down to tea with him. I met a friend down-town, named Samuel Coleman, a carpenter, and soon afterwards another friend, named Patrick Doran, and they accompanied me to the house.

The minister very quickly pronounced the marriage ceremony, and we were made man and wife in the presence of my two witnesses, and another clergyman and his wife who chanced to call. Both of my friends happened to be friends of George McComb, and when they found that I had married his girl they kindly said to me that they would not give two cents for my life if George found out that we were married.

"Oh," I said, "I am going straight to his mother's house. I pay the rent of the room that George and I have occupied for some time, and if Mrs. McComb

has no spare room, she must make George sleep with his brother Billy."

Down-town we came, and when we reached Mrs. McComb's house we found quite a crowd of ladies sitting on the front stoop. I marched boldly up to them, and introduced Miss Lynch as my wife. They remarked that the girl's mother would kill both of us, and thought that George would be too crazy to keep within bounds. I answered that I thought I could take care of myself, and that if George approached in any unfriendly spirit, there was likely to be a funeral. I directed Mrs. McComb to fix up my room.

"Oh, I wouldn't dare," she said, "to let you stay here to-night, for as soon as George hears of it, he will send word to the girl's mother, and I wouldn't have that woman's tongue shot off round this door for $100."

"Good-night," I said, and walked away.

I had formerly lived in rooms with Mrs. Sarah Mills, who kept a furnished apartment-house on Orchard Street, and she placed an empty room at my disposal. The next morning, which was Sunday, after I had been out and ordered our breakfast to be sent in from a restaurant, there was a knocking at the door, and I was informed that a man was waiting to see me. I supposed that it was George McComb's brother Jack, who knew that I had once lived at that house, and, sure enough, upon reaching the door, I found it was he. He grabbed me by the

hand, congratulating me on my marriage, and said that his brother George was a fool. His mother, he said, had sent him around to try and find me, and tell me to come and bring my wife to dinner. "And, Sam," he added, "I will tell you something, but don't say who told you. Mother wants to surprise you, and has fitted up two nice rooms, with a new set of cottage furniture, and I know she is going to let you have them."

I thanked him, and promised to be on hand at dinner-time. Then I went up-stairs and told my wife that Mrs. McComb had sent for us, and that I believed we might look for a surprise. When we reached the house we were received in a very hearty manner by Mrs. McComb, who apologized for not letting us stay there the night before. She said that she was afraid of Mamie's mother, for one thing, and thought that George would probably keep the whole house in an uproar all night, which might end in a fight. Just as Jack had suspected, she had fitted up the rooms expressly for us, and at once invited us to begin to occupy them. A few moments after dark there came a knock at my door, and Mamie opened it. To the surprise of both of us, there stood her father and another man, whom she called her cousin. I was introduced as the girl's husband, of course, and her father said he had called to find out if we had really been married. I told him, "Yes," and was about to show him the certificate, which he refused to look at, when he said:

"I take your word, young man." And turning to his daughter, said: "Mary, as you have made your bed, so you must lie on it."

He then walked out, remarking that he would call again when he had succeeded in getting Mamie's mother cooled down. After he had gone, I told my wife that my impression of her father was that he was a nice old gentleman, and that after he had become reconciled to our marriage, I hoped that he would spend many a Sunday with us.

"Yes," she said, "he is a very good father, but my mother, if she should hear where we are living, would be over here with Jerry Murphy and his crowd, who are all prize-fighters, that hang around Owney Geoghehan's saloon, on the Bowery."

"Well," I said, "if that is the class of friends that your mother has, I am not particular about making her acquaintance; and as for Jerry Murphy and his crowd, I am not afraid of a ten-acre lot full of such ducks."

Then telling her that I would be right back, I called for a moment on a friend of mine, who lived in the next block, and borrowed his double-barreled shot-gun, which I loaded with a couple of blank cartridges. I brought the gun into my rooms, and told my wife that if any of these friends she had spoken of came over from Geoghehan's dive to have any fun with me, they would get left. But there was no danger, and we were not molested. Soon after breakfast I went out and did some work for a man,

and spent a few dollars in crockery and household utensils.

Laden down with these, I returned about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and knocked at my door. To my surprise, nobody answered, and I sat down some of my bundles and opened the door myself. I entered the rooms and found them empty. I sat there and thought a moment, and then called Mrs. McComb and asked her if my wife was with her.

"No," Mrs. McComb said; "I saw her go out about 2 o'clock, and return soon after with another young lady; and George says that the young woman with her was her cousin Rosie Reece, and that Sam had better look out for his wife if she keeps such company as this young woman."

This was a blow to me, but I said nothing, and waited for a couple of hours to see what would turn up. I then inquired where my wife's relatives lived, thinking that she might have gone to her home on a visit, and that her mother was detaining her against her will. Jack McComb spoke up and said:

"Sam, I will go over with you to her mother's house on Elizabeth Street, and we will find out if she has been there to-day. As your mother-in-law is dead sure to give you the devil sooner or later, you might as well take it now as any time."

I thanked John for his proposal, and we hurried around to Elizabeth Street. Instead of going directly to the house I waited on the corner opposite, and

pretty soon Jack made his appearance in company with a young girl, who was introduced as Miss Lizzie Lynch, my sister-in-law. The girl told me that she had met her sister Mamie that afternoon on Prince Street, with her cousin Rosie Reece, and quite likely I would find her at Aunt Reece's home. She pointed out the house from where we stood, and I was soon at the door. I informed the woman that I was Mamie Lynch's husband, and asked her if she had seen my wife, or if she was there.

"Oh," she said, throwing her arms around me, "come in! Are you really Mamie's husband?"

"Yes," I said, as soon as she gave me a chance to recover from my astonishment. She then took me to a lounge and made me sit down, and told me that she was not Mrs. Reece at all, but was Mrs. Sadie Jones; that her husband was a policeman, and that she had sent out her sister Rose with a five-dollar bill and a tin pail, to get some oysters for her husband's supper. That was about half past 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and Mamie, my wife, had gone out with her sister Rose. As they hadn't returned, she thought that they must have gone to my house, and that Rose had forgotten the oysters. I concluded to wait for a while and see what turned up, and also gather as much as I could about what sort of a family I had married into. Finally I left, and went back to my own home and waited around the stoop until about half-past 7 in the evening, when a

insured with him in all parts of the country, and the older the company grows the bigger it gets. I don't know whether it is all due to Mr. Harper, but I can say, from sad experience, that he is one out of a thousand—a man who found time in the midst of all his business to stop and say an encouraging word to a hopeless man, and give him employment when others, with loud pretensions of their charity, turned him away. I only regret that after many months in his employ sickness forced me to leave my work, and I was not wise enough to return to it.

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One Saturday afternoon, in the month of September, while we were standing on the corner of Broadway and Twenty-seventh Street, I remarked to George that I would have to go home then, for I

When we reached the house I requested Mrs. McComb to be sure and make my wife wait if she returned before I got back, as I was going out for a few hours. Mrs. McComb said that if the girl had married one of her sons, she would not let him live an hour with her after the way she had treated me.

"I would kick them both out of the house," remarked Mrs. McComb.

"Don't be so bitter against her," I said; "it may be that she will explain everything satisfactorily when she returns."

"Why, Sam," said Mrs. McComb, "you speak of her as though she was the most innocent creature in the world. I will bet you a week's rent that your wife knows more of the world than either you or I do."

"You are excited," I answered, and I started down-town for the afternoon.

CHAPTER XII.

DESERTED BY MY WIFE.

I HAD some business that day in Newark, N. J., and as George McComb had nothing to do, he said he would go along with me. We took the Pavonia Ferry to Jersey, a little below Jersey City proper, but on arriving at the depot found that the train for Newark had just left. Having an hour on our hands and nothing to do, we walked up the track out of the depot towards a large building that was in Jersey City proper. This was a factory on Green Street, and as we were walking towards it, conversing about my wife, whom should we see but Mrs. Samuel A. Bailey and her cousin.

Here at last was my wife; and nudging George to follow me, I ran after them, but my wife had recognized me, and they began to run also.

Just as I was turning the corner of Spring Street, I think, I saw them run into a grocery store. When I reached the door I asked if two women had entered, but he replied that they had not. While I was looking about in astonishment, I noticed a gate in a high board fence, and through this saw a house some distance back in the yard. A boy who was standing

near told me that he had seen a couple of girls run in there, and they had rooms on the first floor of the little house. I lost no time in following and knocking at the door on the first floor. Receiving no answer, I went up-stairs, and as I reached the top step a woman came out of one of the rooms on the top floor. I asked her if she had seen any one enter the house lately.

"Yes," she said, "a devil of a fine couple of girls they were, and running as if they were mad. They went into a room on Mrs. McCann's floor."

I thanked the woman, and soon presented myself at Mrs. McCann's door, where I had first knocked when entering the house. Receiving no answer, I stooped down, and looking through the key-hole, I saw sitting on the opposite side of the room no less a personage than my wife. I shouted to her through the door that I would burst it open unless she immediately let me in. I was admitted finally, and calmly taking a seat, informed my wife and her cousin that they ought to be ashamed of themselves for behaving as they had done. My wife began to cry, and said that Rosie, her cousin, had induced her to leave me, and these were the only words I could get out of either of them. I told my wife that I wanted her to go home with me, whereupon Miss Rose spoke up, and said that they were just going home when I accidentally met them.

"Well, what made you run," I asked, "if you intended to go home?"

"Oh, I don't know," Rose replied; "but I wish you would go out and get a pint of beer, and by the time you get back we will be all ready."

Like a fool, I left these two birds with the cage door open, and when I returned with the beer they had both flown away. There were two children of Mrs. McCann's in the room when I returned, and the elder of them, a little girl of eight or nine years of age, told me that both had gone out of the gate and up the street. The child said that Rose had to drag Mamie, my wife, along to get her to go with her. The little girl also remarked, as nearly as I could understand her, that the two girls were relatives of some kind of the child's mother. I did not stop to inquire very fully about the relations of the parties, but my mind was very much relieved to find that my wife was stopping at a respectable house.

George, who had been waiting in the street, said that he supposed the girls had gone home of their own accord, and that the best thing we could do was to take the ferry back to New York. We hurried to Mrs. McComb's house, but, as I feared, no one had seen anything of my wife. Then I ran over to Rose's home, thinking that perhaps the girls had gone there first. But no; they neither of them had been seen there. I then related to Rose's mother the story of how I had accidentally met both of the girls in Jersey City.

Rose's father said, that if I should meet his daughter he would be obliged to me if I would hand

her over to the first police officer I came across, and notify him. Her mother, however, objected to this summary action, and declared that Rose was a good girl, and that she and my wife were only out on a little picnic. It made me smile at the way the good woman looked at the whole matter, and just then their eldest daughter Sadie, the policeman's wife, came in. She invited me over to her apartments, saying that she had something to tell me that was important. It turned out that her valuable message was simply a request to have me go and get her a growler of beer.

I ate very little dinner that day, and waited very impatiently for evening, having engaged the services of Jack McComb and a friend of his to accompany me over to Jersey City that night about 10 o'clock, where I suspected I would catch them. At half-past 9 we left our house, and went directly to the McCanns' place. We entered the hallway, and I knocked at the door, but the house was all in darkness, and the family were all asleep. A man's voice inquired what the trouble was, and I told him, in as few words as possible, to open the door, because a friend wanted to see him.

In a few moments he and his wife came to the door, and I stated my business to them, excusing myself for my late call. Mr. McCann invited us all in, and his wife told me that her little daughter had described to her how the two girls had run in there, and that they were her two cousins. She had not

heard of Mamie's marriage until her child told her that a man calling himself Mamie's husband had come in after them, and wanted to take her home. Mrs. McCann declared that neither of the girls had returned, and that they had better not. Mr. McCann then said that he had always taken Mamie Lynch for a respectable girl, but never liked the actions of Rosie, who he hoped would never come to his house again. I told them that they must excuse me for waking them up out of their sleep; but Mr. McCann sympathized with me, and said he would let me know if he heard anything of my runaway wife. We returned home, and I spent another sleepless night.

Early the next day, with George McComb, I went over to Newark, and on our way back we went into the office of the Chief of Police in Jersey City, and gave him a full description of my wife and Rose. The chief said he would hold the girls if he found them, and would send out a general alarm to all the Station-Houses. About 7 o'clock in the evening, as I was sitting on the front stoop with Mrs. McComb, George came running up the street and said to me :

" Sam, I have just seen Mamie and Rosie. They are walking up Orchard Street. You go up to the corner of Stanton Street and then walk down towards Orchard, and I will go back down Rivington Street and through to Orchard. In that way we will have them between us sure."

I hurried in the direction he had told me to go, and, sure enough, just as I reached the corner of Stanton and Orchard streets I came face to face with them. My wife spoke up first, and said:

"Sam, I am going home. I will go with you now."

Without saying another word, she took my arm, and turning to Rose, remarked: "You had better go home now, and not keep your father and mother worrying any longer."

George coming up behind them at a very opportune moment, offered to escort Rose as far as her house, and they followed on behind us. Neither my wife nor I said a word to each other until we had reached our rooms. Then I lighted the lamp and asked my wife if she was hungry. She said she was almost starved, and tired out with constant walking.

"All right," I said, "I will go out and buy you something to eat for your supper, and after you have rested a little I shall want to know why you went away, with very full particulars."

I then left her and went out to a Delicatessen store near by, where I bought some cold cooked meat and other things necessary to get up a good supper. When my wife had finished her meal, she related to me her story, as follows: She said that on the afternoon of the day she ran away, she dressed and went over to Prince Street to her aunt's house, to tell her cousins of her marriage. When she got there she found the news had preceded her. Her aunt,

cousins, and herself then had several pints of beer during the afternoon, and about 3 or 4 o'clock Sadie, the married cousin, gave Rose a $5 bill and a small tin pail, telling her to go across to Stanton Street and get some oysters for her supper. As this was on her way home, she said she would go along with Rose. Instead of stopping at the fish market, Rose came home with her, and remained at my rooms a few moments.

Then it was that Rose proposed to my wife that they take the $5 bill and go to a picnic in Harlem that evening. My wife said that she, being full of beer, gave her consent without stopping to think what she was about. They went to the picnic and remained there until about sunrise the next morning, when Rose proposed that they go over to Jersey City and make a call on their cousin, Mrs. McCann. It was there that I accidentally ran across them. My wife said that she would have gone home with me then, had it not been that Rose declared that I would beat and scold her.

"Well," I said, "where did you go after you ran away from me in Jersey City?"

"Oh, we came over to New York and went up to a cousin's in Harlem, where we stayed until evening, and then went to another all-night picnic. To-day we have walked all over Central Park and down to the Bowery, and as the $5 bill was all gone, we both decided to come home."

As my wife concluded her story she begged my

forgiveness, and burst into tears. I spoke to her very kindly, and asked her what she thought people would believe when they heard that she had run away from me so soon after marriage. I told her I didn't care myself for the opinion of the public, but that I had no guarantee that my wife would not play the same trick on me the first time her cousin visited her again.

"Oh, no," she cried; "I promise you on my knees that I will never run away again."

"Well," I said, "I forgive you, and I do wish for the future you would see as little as possible of your cousin Rose; and you may tell her, from me, that if I ever catch her in the house she will go out of the window."

We both of us agreed not to speak of the unfortunate matter, and everything went along very smoothly. I managed to secure a horse and wagon, and made a very fair living by pedling about the streets. We kept the rooms at Mrs. McComb's about seven months, and then, as my wife and the landlady had some difficulties, I sold out my pedling business and started housekeeping up-town in apartment-rooms of my own. Everything was going along nicely. I was canvassing books, and doing fairly well, when one day upon returning home I found that Rose had been to the house and made trouble again. She had been telling Mamie a lot of stuff about the annoyance of keeping house, and my wife told me that she wanted to sell the furniture

and go into a furnished room, declaring that it was much cheaper. One thing led to another until we had quite a serious dispute, and then I thought I had heard the last of it.

But no; a couple of weeks afterwards, upon my going home earlier than usual one day, I found Rose there. I said nothing unpleasant at the time, and allowed Rose to remain with us that night, as she told me her parents knew where she was and wouldn't worry. Next day I went to my work as usual, and that night when I came home I found my wife very much under the influence of beer. I made no remark until after I had eaten my supper, and then went to lie down on the lounge and read the evening paper, as was my custom. To my astonishment, the lounge was not there. I asked my wife what had become of it, and she told me that one of the legs had got broken off, and that she had sent it away to be mended. It struck me as very strange that the furniture man had to cart the lounge away to mend it, and I told her that it didn't look reasonable.

"Oh, the lounge is all right," my wife said. "Don't worry;" and I didn't. I let it drop, and things went on after that pretty much as usual for a week or two. On my return to the house one night I again found Miss Rose there, and both of them full of beer. They managed to set the table and get the supper ready, so I made no fuss. The next morning while I was dressing I went to the looking-glass to

comb my hair, and, to my astonishment, the glass was gone. Then I was mad, and I asked my wife where the looking-glass was.

"Oh, Sam," she said, "the picture man was here, and as I didn't have the instalment ready for him, he walked in and took the glass."

"The devil he did!" I said; "I guess the glass has gone to look for the lounge."

Then I told my wife that I wanted her to tell me where the furniture man that had the lounge kept his store. All she could tell me was that it was somewhere on Second Avenue; he had given her his number, but she had forgotten it. Of course I had come to the conclusion that the lounge and the looking-glass had both been sold to buy beer with. On many occasions my wife had been in a sulky mood, and asked me why I didn't move into a furnished room; it would be cheaper than keeping house. Finally I made an arrangement with Mrs. Sarah Mills, who had been my landlady in former years, to take a nice room with her on Forsyth Street.

When I told my wife of this arrangement she was as pleased as a dove. I told her that I knew why she was so happy at the prospect, and that it meant that she would have a room full of company all the time, and would keep pretty well filled up with beer.

"Oh no, Sam, I will not touch a drop of anything," she assured me.

On the strength of what I had told my wife about engaging rooms with Mrs. Mills, this charming help-

mate of mine one day sold out all the furniture, and when I went home at night I found a note stating that my wife had gone down to Mrs. Mills's house. Well, I was hopping mad, as I had intended to move my own furniture down to my new rooms. When I reached Mrs. Mills's house, I found the room full of people. There was Rose and her married sister Sadie, and they were all gloriously happy on beer. Then I knew well the furniture had been sold, and what had become of the money. Of course I had a row over this, but when we made up again things ran more smoothly than ever for about three months, when my wife presented me with a fine baby boy.

We were both happy, and everything seemed to be bright for the future. But alas! this happiness was too good to last long. During my wife's sickness my mother-in-law had been in attendance, and I had partly promised that before long I would go to live in my father-in-law's family. I knew, when I promised this, that the chances were that the moment I should enter my mother-in-law's house my doom would be sealed. But when the child was about two months old, my wife, who had been to see her mother several times, informed me one morning that hereafter I would find her at her mother's house. I told my wife that I dreaded going, but she was crazy to move, and declared that her mother thought the world of her little grandson. There was nothing left but to go, so I told my wife to pack up what little we had, and I would join her that evening.

CHAPTER XIII.

SENT TO PRISON AGAIN.

WELL, the row was not long in coming, and the very first evening that we were there I had a fuss with my wife's little brother, a boy about eight years old, who persisted in teasing my little baby. My mother-in-law flew at me as though she would tear me to pieces, and showed her love for my child by declaring that her little boy wouldn't hurt the little brat. Then she consoled her son by telling him that he should tease my child the next day while I was away at work. Well, the readers of this book can imagine the position I was in; all the wealth of a "Van Astorbilt" could not have induced me to leave that house and go to work the next day. Of course it is easy to see how this child was the cause of no end of trouble, day and night.

We remained with my wife's mother all winter, until the middle of June, when one Sunday my wife came to me with the baby in her arms, and said that her mother had just struck her and ordered her out of the house. I was working at the time in a large factory, running a steam elevator, and I knew that I could start up housekeeping at a minute's no-

tice. I jumped up immediately, and said to my wife:

"Put your hat on, and go and sit in the park at Washington Square until I find a room."

But my wife said no; that she thought we had better go over and spend the night with her cousin Sadie, and take more time to find a room. Sadie seemed glad to see us, and all that afternoon and the next day we did very little but drink beer. About 9 o'clock in the evening I kicked against getting any more beer, and after several very broad hints Sadie suggested that perhaps we would like to find permanent lodgings somewhere else. We immediately got ready and left Sadie's house, and I have never since entered it.

My wife and I went to the home of a Mr. Weed, who was a friend of ours, where we were well received, and remained for a week. I made a search for permanent lodgings, and finally secured rooms for my wife and little boy not far from my mother-in-law, who had become better-natured since I had left her house. It was only a little while, however, before my little child was taken sick and died. After the death of my little son, my wife led me such a life that I had to give up work and attend to her. She was full of beer from one week's end to another, and one day, while I was absent from the house for a short time, she disposed of the furniture and cleared out. I saw nothing of her for a couple of weeks, when, by mere accident, I met her on the

street. She had been on a protracted spree, and was very desirous that I should again take her back and live with her.

Once more we started housekeeping together in a furnished room, and in a few months I was presented with another baby, this time a girl. We lived very comfortably until the child was two years old, when my wife again returned to her drinking habits, and I was obliged to take the little infant and place her in the care of my sister. This time I was tending bar at John Murphy's liquor store, on Sixth Avenue, when my wife became such an intolerable nuisance, hanging about the place, that Murphy was obliged to discharge me. I found employment with Joseph Welling, who kept a liquor saloon at 128 West Houston Street, and I had been working there about six months, when the child died; and my wife bothered me at my work so much that Welling told me I must either leave him or keep my wife away from the bar-room. I had no control whatever over her, and was soon compelled to give up this employment. Then I went to canvassing again, and my wife continued to grow worse and worse, and my friends reported to me almost daily the scandalous doings of the woman.

It was while I was making a meagre living canvassing for books, and driven almost crazy with the behavior of my wife, that I happened one day to meet an old friend, who told me he had a chance for me to make a little money. He was a crook, and I

knew it, but on the impulse of the moment, without a thought that I was returning to my old career of crime, I accompanied him to a saloon, where we met another man, who handed me a forged check, together with the business card of a large confectionery store on South Fifth Avenue. On the back of the card was written an order upon a drug-store for a certain amount of Vanilla beans.

My friend, it seemed, had been to the establishment, which was a large importing house, the day before, and had priced and inspected Vanilla beans, and had directed the clerk to set aside a large number of pounds, saying that they would send for them the next day. When I presented the card I handed the firm the check, which they received in payment, and delivered to me the beans. I handed over my purchase to one of the crooks, and was given another check and business card on another firm, where I went through a similar transaction, and returned with another can of Vanilla beans.

We then took both packages to Jersey City, where my partners attempted to dispose of them. For some reason which I never understood, my partners were disappointed in attempting to sell the beans, and brought back to the city one box of them and disposed of it at a Broadway drug-store up-town. The other box, that had been left at the house of one of the crooks in Jersey City, was disposed of to the same firm soon afterwards. I received a portion of

the money that resulted from this fraudulent transaction, and then continued my canvassing.

A few days afterwards, while passing along Chambers Street, a member of one of the victimized drug firms met and at once recognized me. He called a policeman and had me arrested. I had been in the Station-House only a short time, when a clerk from the other drug-store called and identified me, and the case was of course complete. I took the District-Attorney's advice, and pleaded guilty. Recorder Smyth sentenced me to five years' imprisonment with hard labor in the State's Prison, and the next day I was on my way to Sing Sing. I remained there, however, only seventeen days, when, on the twenty-second day of September, 1884, I was transferred to Clinton Prison, and at once began serving my sentence.

While there, I attended to my work to the best of my ability and gained the good-will of the officials of the prison. It was not long after I began serving my term that my wife, through drunkenness and debauchery, was taken sick, and having no one to look out for her, died. Her relatives and friends had long since refused to visit her, and her body would have been consigned to the city's army of unknown dead had not the kind-hearted and generous Mr. E. B. Harper paid her funeral expenses and rescued her from Potter's Field. This I didn't know for some time after I had left prison, and simply illustrates what I have already stated in a

previous chapter concerning Mr. Harper's generous charity.

While it is true that I need not have again resorted to crime had I not seen fit, yet I know very well that I would have been an honest man had it not been for my wife. I consider that one of the greatest mistakes I made was that hasty marriage. Had she been a good wife to me, no man would have enjoyed his home more than I, and no temptation would have been strong enough to have induced me to resort to criminal methods as I did, when driven nearly to despair through her wretched behavior.

CHAPTER XIV.

REMINISCENCES OF BROTHER-CONVICTS.

WHILE I was in prison I met many of the most notorious crooks, bank burglars, highwaymen, confidence men, and pickpockets of the metropolis. They all knew, of course, that for many years I had been a professional criminal, and they regarded me as a man in whom they could place confidence. Many of them told me freely the history of their lives, and I learned for the first time the explanation of many mysteries that had always been a puzzle to the police, and various rich men who had been victimized.

I was approached with a scheme at one time by some of the men who had cells on my tier, and whose sentences would all expire at about the same time that mine did. They had thought out a plan for making money, and desired me to join them in it. The scheme was to organize a gang of about half a dozen crooks, to go down to some town in the South and open a bank.

They were to dress themselves well, and assume the general air of responsible business men. Two of the most presentable were to precede the others, buy

some real estate, look over the ground, bring forged letters of introduction and recommendation from reputable men in the North, and present them to the mayor and practical business men of the town they intended to victimize.

When these advance-agents of the gang had become known to the citizens, they would then look over the business interests and make themselves known to the capitalists of the place. Then they were to propose the opening of a new bank. One of the men was to offer to put in a certain amount of capital, and some influential but easily duped citizen of the town was to be appointed president. After an organization had been made and a charter secured, the two crooks were to suggest a young man whom they knew, and who had had several years' experience in a New York bank, for the cashier of the proposed institution. They were then to bring him from New York with a few other clerks, and open the bank.

After a few months of honest business transactions, and as soon as the credit of the bank had been established, their scheme was to collect every dollar that was possible from all sources, tie it all up in a bundle, close the doors of the bank, and skip out. I was given the whole details of the scheme, and requested to hold myself in readiness to go to whatever city they decided to victimize, as the cashier of the bank. For some reason this scheme has not yet been carried out, but

I am expecting at any time to hear of its being done.

I had for a cell-mate during a portion of my term a well known house-breaker, who had robbed many a residence, but who had never been caught but once before. Some of his descriptions of his experiences while engaged in robbing houses were very interesting, but at the same time showed me conclusively that it was a business too dangerous to be worth the risk. He always declared that the greatest danger in entering a house was from the women. He would rather, he said, enter a room where there were half a dozen men asleep than a room where there was one woman sleeping. If by any accident he ran across a man suddenly, he could usually induce the man to keep quiet, or take his chances in making an escape before he was caught.

But if he suddenly awoke a woman in her room, or came across her about the house, there was nothing under heaven that he could do that would prevent her from screaming "Murder!" at the top of her voice. It did no good to flash a dark-lantern in her face and point a pistol at her, and order her to keep quiet at the risk of her life. This method would, nine times out of ten, keep a man quiet who hadn't a pistol within reach, but however immediate or threatening the burglar's pistol was, it never seemed to have any effect in quieting the screams of a woman. He had had them, he said, sit up in bed and send up screams, one after another in rapid succession, that would

have roused a graveyard. The only thing in such a case was to make his escape and leave everything behind. It was no use arguing with a woman.

He told me about one occasion when he was walking through a house in his stocking-feet that he came into a room he supposed was unoccupied. Upon striking a match and holding it up, he saw three old maids lying in their bed, each one with their eyes wide open and looking at him; the next instant the three old maids were out of the bed and after him.

"I never was so scared in all my life," he said; "and I dropped everything I had, and jumped through a second-story window to get away."

On another occasion he told me that a friend who never did any burglaring himself, but laid out the land for burglars, informed him of an old couple who were living all alone, who had considerable money secreted in the house. He, with another crook, secured a plan of the inside of the house and the room in which the old gentleman and his wife slept. They approached the place one night cautiously, and walked around the house. There was no light burning, but as it was the fall of the year, and the dry leaves were scattered on the ground, they probably made some slight noise as they were making their tour of inspection.

They had just approached the front door and were looking through the side-lights of glass on either side of the door, when, without a particle of warn-

ing, crash came a flat-iron, grazing his head by about half an inch, and smashing through the glass. They withdrew hastily to the shadow of a tree near the house, and very soon a stoutly built young man appeared at the front door with a light. The thieves knew that there was no use to attempt a robbery, of course, after they had been discovered, but they thought that they would frighten the people in the house; so both of them drew their revolvers and fired one or two shots in the air, which so terrified the young man, who supposed that he was being made a target of, that he dropped the lamp in the doorway, slammed the door, and disappeared.

The funny part of it all to the crooks was what the newspapers had to say about it. Of course, the neighbors had heard the shots fired, and the next morning inquired what the trouble was. This was the young man's opportunity, and the story he told of his valor and bravery was very amusing. The reporters of the local papers heard of it, and went to him, whereupon he told this story:

"I hadn't been home to see my father and mother for a good many years, and I returned unexpectedly a few days ago. Probably the burglars had no idea that anybody but the old gentleman and my mother were in the house. I had just gone to bed, when I heard people walking about outside of the porch, and I concluded that they must be thieves. I groped my way down-stairs in my bare feet, and stood opposite the front-door, waiting patiently for them

to try the key. In a few moments, sure enough, I heard them come up on the porch, and a big, burly fellow, about six feet tall and weighing somewhere about two hundred and seventy pounds, inserted a pair of burglar's nippers in the lock. I had my fingers resting lightly on the key and felt it turn, and heard the bolt slip noiselessly back.

"Just as the door opened a few inches and the burly ruffian was about to enter, I struck him a terrific blow between the eyes, knocking him senseless. Before I could do anything further, another of the gang hit me with a black-jack. It was a glancing blow, and only struck my shoulder. I jumped for him, and he seized me, calling out to the rest of the gang to come up. Four other men then appeared, and, single-handed, I fought them off. Freeing myself for a moment, however, I rushed up-stairs for my revolver, and when I returned they were just carrying their senseless companion to a wagon they had standing in the road. As I approached they drove off, and I emptied my barrels at the departing gang. After two of the shots, I heard two of the villains cry out in agony, and I have no doubt that I wounded, if not killed, at least one of them."

This was the story the brave young man told who had been frightened almost to death by these two crooks, who had no intention of harming him.

Few people would realize the misfortunes that overtake crooks when they are just on the point of securing the prizes they are after. I know of a gang

who had been watching a certain safe for three weeks, in order to rob it. They secured burglars' tools, and an outfit that cost them over a thousand dollars, and then, when everything was ready and they had positive information that a very large amount of money was in the safe, they entered the store and began work. They labored all night, as fast as they could, and finally, as it was growing light in the East, the big doors yielded. A search, however, of every corner in the big safe revealed exactly eleven pennies, and no more.

They afterwards learned that the night before the robbery the proprietor of the store, for some reason, had taken the money to his home, intending to deposit it early the next morning in the bank. On account of this unexpected accident, the burglars had their trouble for their pains.

This same gang, on another occasion, watched a safe for a long time, and knew positively that a large sum of money, amounting to many thousand dollars, was locked up in it. They worked diligently, drilling a hole through the steel plates, and got their powder all in preparation for blowing it, when one of the gang suggested that, as it was a drug store, the jar of the falling safe-door would make such a clatter among the bottles and the glasses that it would be heard a great deal further than the noise of the explosion. The gang then worked another long hour, winding the safe round and round with heavy ropes.

When everything was secure, they touched off the fuse and, sure enough, the big door was blown out against the ropes, which acted as a spring-cushion, and, to their amazement and disgust, sent the door back again into its place like a wedge into a piece of wood, and in such a way that no amount of pulling and hauling could dislodge it. They didn't have enough powder for another blast, and they didn't dare wait around long enough to secure more powder. So, after a hopeless survey of all their night's work, they said good-bye to the safe, with the door as securely guarding the money as before they tried to blow it open.

Jimmy Hope, and a gang of bank burglars and safe blowers, who was in Sing Sing when I was, told me of a queer experience he had. He had located a big safe in a country bank, where there was a large sum of money on the last day of every month, and which was paid out on the following day to the employees of a lot of cotton mills in the town. Hope went to the town as an insurance agent, opened an account at the bank, had a few checks cashed now and then, and became thoroughly acquainted with the style of safe used in the bank, which he was glad to note was a very old pattern, and one that could be quite easily blown. When everything was ready he sent for four members of his gang from New York, and sawing the plates of the door to the bank, they entered.

Hope stepped in first, and when they reached the

back room of the bank he flashed his dark-lantern upon the safe, and, to his astonishment, by the side of the old one stood a brand-new safe with a time lock on it. It had been moved in the day before while Hope was off to meet the gang.

For an hour Hope stood there lost in thought, while the rest of his gang sat about on the high stools occupied in the day-time by the clerks, and smoked their pipes in silence. At the end of an hour Hope said:

"Come, boys, it is an even chance of getting the money and losing it, and I won't take even chances. It is just as likely that the cashier moved all the money into the new safe as it is that he has not yet made the transfer from the old safe. We have only got time to blow one of them, and if we make a mistake we have lost it all. I won't take the risk."

I had never had very much experience in any class of crime except forgery, but for a great number of years I have had an intimate acquaintance with professional criminals of every class. While with my friends I met a great many people who have positions in society, but who are friends and assistants of crooks. These are men who hold places in big establishments as clerks of one kind or another, simply for the purpose of obtaining information about where the money is kept, and how the concern may be robbed. From these people the professional criminals receive the tips and the inside information which enables them to crack a safe at the time when

the largest amount of money is in it, and also to become acquainted with the habits and hours of the people employed in the building. These men are called "Spotters," and they meet members of the gang secretly, and give them the information that is necessary for them to do the job.

They have the appearance, in every way, of being honest men, and, of course, their employers never suspect for a moment that they are connected with gangs of criminals. They are at their desks every day attending to their work, and when it is suddenly discovered that a robbery has been committed no suspicion falls on any of their trusted employees. The police are called in at once, and declare that the job is the work of expert professionals. That settles it, of course, that the firm was not robbed by any of the employees, and when the detectives question the victims as to whether they suspect anybody, the answer is invariably given, in an indignant tone, that nobody employed by the firm could possibly have any connection with the robbery. Thus the police get no assistance, and it is the most difficult thing in the world to find out who the thieves are.

In all big bank robberies a great deal of work has to be done before the cracksmen themselves get at the safe. Some person of good address and business-like appearance must open an account at the bank, and become more or less acquainted with at least one clerk in the establishment. He manages to drop in, and does business at the bank at just about the

hour this particular clerk goes out to lunch, or leaves for the day. Accidentally he invites him to take a drink or lunch with him, and then, by expressing some fear about the security of the bank's vaults against expert thieves, he learns what he wants in regard to the safes.

The burglar does not need to examine the locks and bolts of the vaults. All he requires is to know the name of the manufacturers of the safe and the year in which it was made. He then has in his mind the whole mechanism of the safe, and can tell at a glance, when he finally reaches the iron door, just where to put his drill to strike the tumblers. Every gang of safe-blowers has at least one educated and skilled locksmith and machinist, whose business it is to know exactly how every firm manufactures its safes throughout the country. He can draw a diagram of the whole inside working of the locks as soon as he is told who made the safe, and the year it was manufactured. Under these experienced hands the cracksmen do their work, and there is no safe or vault in existence to-day that cannot be opened by expert bank burglars if they are given a reasonable amount of time.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

AND now I have told all that is of interest of my unfortunate and misspent life. I had good and honest parents, and an ordinary education. My father, as I have before said, was a member of the New York police force, and certainly I should have learned from him the hardships of the life of a criminal. But it was not so. I was impelled by curiosity to learn all that I could about the criminal classes, and was drawn by a strange sort of fascination into crime.

After my first experience with the law, I intended to abandon my former life; but again found myself surrounded by my former associates, and I slipped back once more into my old ways. It is the most difficult thing in the world to secure honest employment when once the brand of the prison is upon you. There is no institution and no charity that secures work for discharged prisoners; and thousands of men who leave the penitentiaries, resolved to lead new lives, are driven to theft by hunger and thirst every year. The business community cannot be blamed for not placing trust in a man who has

been proved a thief. Few employers dare trust their interests to an ex-convict, and it is but a reasonable business precaution. But there is an abundance of work where a struggling man may be entirely removed from temptation, if he could only find it and induce people to give him a trial.

There is one great cause of crime that I am impelled to mention before ending this history. It is hard drink. I have known thousands of amateur and professional criminals, and I can say, from personal knowledge, that nine-tenths of the men and women in the prisons would be free to-day if they had never tasted liquor. There is no doubt of this. Any police officer will say so, and every police judge knows it. I have known thousands who would have been perfectly honest if they had not been drinking men. Almost every assault and murder is committed under the influence of liquor. Men buy revolvers and knives when they are partially drunk, and never think of using them until they are again drunk, when they commit deeds that would never have been done had their heads been clear. The barroom brawls and petty disputes over cards and women rarely amount to anything more serious than an exchange of hard words, unless some one's brain is excited by liquor. Then the most trivial dispute blossoms into a bloody fight, and one of the party is stabbed or shot. I have seen hundreds of such fights, and I know that murder would indeed be rare if whisky did not play a leading part in the tragedy.

Liquor, too, is the prime cause of dishonesty. When a man gets to drinking he has less time for his business, and makes more leisure for enjoying himself. He spends his whole time with others that drink, and at once a thousand expenses and ways of spending money are opened up. He must drink, and his friends must drink, and between drinks he must play billiards or pool, or gamble. After spending all he has in his pockets, he borrows from his friends, and before he realizes it, he is up to his ears in debt. Then the temptation begins. He must have money, and his salary no longer is enough to satisfy his tastes. At his first opportunity he becomes a thief.

It is very seldom that imprisonment in a penal institution ever reforms a man. Inspector Byrnes has truthfully said that "few criminals ever reform." This is very true. The influence of a prison has no tendency to reform a man. He does not feel sorry for what he has done, so much as he curses his hard luck at having been caught. He is given plenty of time to think over his career, and he usually only wishes he had been given another chance—not to reform, but to avoid being caught. When a gambler gets up from the table, after losing his pile, he does not regret that he is a gambler, but he is mad to think he did not bet on the card that turned up a winner. It is just the same with criminals. It is very rare to find a really repentant man; and when they leave prison, after serving their

term, they have their heads full of new schemes for throwing dust in the eyes of the police, and doing their work next time so they will not be caught. I know this is not a very cheerful view to take, but I am trying to tell the truth as I know it, and it certainly has been my experience with criminals, both in and out of prison, that few ever care to reform. I honestly believe that if a way was opened for ex-convicts to find work at once, most of them would reform and be honest, rather than run the risk of being caught again, and returned to prison. But it is the universal belief among them that the world is against them, and they must fight for a living, and take the chances of being caught.

Probably there is no person in the world so universally feared by crooks as Inspector Byrnes, the Chief of the Detective Bureau at Police Headquarters. He is the terror of every crooked man, not only in New York, but other cities. There are thousands of men who would rush to New York at once if he should die or leave the police force. While he is here they do not dare show their heads in town, and would no more think of doing a job in New York than they would of trying to swim across the Atlantic Ocean. He knows them all, and they all know him, and most of them, at one time or other in their lives, have had good reason to know that the good old days when crooks did as they pleased here came to a sudden end when Inspector Byrnes took charge of the Detective Bureau. The younger criminals who have

never done a job in his domain are more afraid of him than the older crooks, and when they visit New York no power on earth could induce them to do a crooked thing.

The result of this is very easy to be seen. Where are the big gangs that worked New York and roamed over the whole country a few years ago? Mr. Byrnes has put them all in Sing Sing. Where are the big forgers nowadays, who feasted on Wall Street, the big money centre? They are not residing *here* any more. Why have we not had any of the famous old bank burglaries that used to be so skillfully done, and always netted the cracksmen several hundred thousand dollars? What has driven all the big professionals out of New York to the big cities of Europe? Why do the men up in Sing Sing and Clinton run off to Chicago and the West, or buy tickets on ocean steamers, as soon as they have served their sentences? They always used to come down to their old haunts in New York, but they don't any more. How does it happen that money packages are no longer snatched from bank messengers down in Wall Street, which used to be a daily occurrence a few years ago?

Every crook knows that it is no use to try to work New York now. The trouble is that big crimes don't remain mysteries any longer. They are cleared up by Inspector Byrnes in two or three days, and somebody goes up the river. He knows every professional criminal in the world, and he can look at a

job and come pretty near telling who did the work. He knows where to find any crook he wants, and when he has got his evidence together he sends a message to him, and the man comes. He don't have to arrest them. They come, and before they get to the Inspector's room at headquarters, they have made up their minds that Mr. Byrnes struck the right scent, and there is no use trying to fool him any longer. But, as I said before, if Inspector Byrnes should die to-morrow there are a lot of exiles who would come hurrying home as fast as the railroad trains and steamers could carry them.

And now I have finished the story of the ups and downs of my life. My criminal career is ended. I have long since done my last dishonest act, and I have, I hope, bid good-bye to my old acquaintances forever. I have fortunately found a few kindly disposed people, who have helped me to publish this book, and it depends upon the charity of the public whether I receive encouragement and a new start in life.

THE END.

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